

**TABLOIDISATION AND THE COVERAGE OF POLITICAL ISSUES IN  
ZIMBABWE – THE CASE OF JOICE MUJURU**

By

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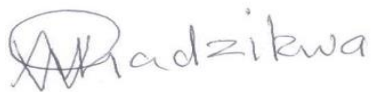
**CO-SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR M. T. VAMBE**

**OCTOBER 2017**

## DECLARATION

**STUDENT NUMBER: 5726 – 731 -6**

I Wellington Gadzikwa declare that: **TABLOIDISATION AND THE COVERAGE OF POLITICAL ISSUES IN ZIMBABWE – THE CASE OF JOICE MUJURU** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



**06 /10/2017**

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Wellington Gadzikwa

Date

## SUMMARY

The study critically explored the tabloidisation of political news in Zimbabwe by focussing on the coverage of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF and government by selected newspapers. The study analysed three national dailies across the ownership divide; *The Herald*, *Daily News* and *NewsDay*. The objective of the study was to establish whether or not the decline in standards of journalism and performance in Zimbabwe could be attributed to tabloidisation. The study employed a qualitative methodology through qualitative content analysis and in-depth interviews to assess whether the framing reflected tabloid or broadsheet journalism styles. The framing of Joice Mujuru by *The Herald* was pejorative and derisive as she was depicted as corrupt, traitor, inept and a simplistic thinker who cannot handle issues to do with statecraft. *Daily News* sympathised with Joice Mujuru as a victim of chauvinistic factional politics in ZANU PF, especially, after the death of her husband, General Solomon Mujuru. The study argued that Joice was also depicted as a brave leader who could challenge for the office of the president, if she formed a coalition with MDC –T leader Morgan Tsvangirai. *Daily News* sought to counter all the negative framing of Joice Mujuru by *The Herald*. *NewsDay* framing was sympathetic, like *Daily News* but was more inclined on creating an image of a moderate leader in Mujuru, one who would be acceptable to all Zimbabweans because she had the critical liberation war credentials that Tsvangirai lacked and Mujuru's perceived abilities to extricate the country from the economic challenges by mending relationships with the West. Despite the diametrically opposed frames in terms of *The Herald* versus *Daily News* and *NewsDay*, all the newspapers are undergoing the damaging process of tabloidisation by employing tabloid styles and formatting in their political news coverage through sensationalism, trivialisation and emotionalism. It was argued that the media needs self-introspection and recommitment to ethical and objective journalism as the watchdogs of society.

## **KEY TERMS**

- Tabloids,
- tabloidisation,
- sensationalism,
- trivialisation,
- framing,
- broadsheet,
- The Herald,
- NewsDay,
- Daily News,
- journalism,
- media standards,
- ZANU PF,
- Joice Mujuru.



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## **DEDICATION**

To my wife Locadia, Michael, Catriona and Sinclair for all the support. I love you.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### 1.0 Background to the study

After the 31 July, 2013, harmonised elections then Minister of Media, Information and Broadcasting Services, Jonathan Moyo bemoaned the state of the media in Zimbabwe, characterised by what he described as artificial divisions created by a polarised media. Moyo lamented that the media failed to report socio-political and economic developments in the country alleging that;

We have a media that is principally useless. If you rely on it for information about the state of the country, you will be by choice putting yourself among the ignorant; you won't know what is really going on by reading the media. (*The Herald, Friday 2 January, 2015*)

In light of these sentiments, Moyo commissioned the first-ever national inquiry into the state of media, the Information and Media Panel of Inquiry (IMPI). The mandate of IMPI was to promote and elevate the standards of media practice. The inquiry reflected a general concern from government that the media was not functioning according to societal expectations. The concerns of failure by media to meet these expectations were taken to be representative of overall perceptions on the state of the media. The IMPI sought to;

inquire into the integrity and adequacy of news and information in relation to the needs of or on; the economy, national interest, national security, politics, national processes such as referenda, elections, constitutional exercises and inquiries, citizenry, both rural and urban as well as local and diaspora, rights and justice, global issues, gender and marginalised groups (IMPI:2014).

Similar concerns over the perceived decline of standards of journalism were also shared by media civic organisations and media academics, especially with regards to lack of adherence to ethical journalism practices (Media Ethics Committee 2002, GPA 2008, VMCZ: 2013, MMPZ 2014). The other concern also involved vindictiveness on the part of the owners who dictate editorial content, resulting in unethical practices (Mano 2005). In light of these concerns, the IMPI findings demonstrated that polarisation has resulted in the media failing to create an ideal public sphere where issues affecting society can be debated and discussed objectively. In particular IMPI noted that;

misrepresentation, which is often coupled with sensational headlines has become an unfortunate phenomenon of Zimbabwe's journalism and a cause for constant frustration among newspaper readers who have sadly come to a realisation that the stories appearing on front pages of Zimbabwe's various newspapers do not always bear any resemblance to the sexy headlines below which they are printed (IMPI:198).

From the above quote, it is possible to argue that the decline in journalism standards goes beyond media polarisation and point towards tabloidisation of the press. Polarisation of the media simply resembles the politics of the day. The media is bound to take opposing positions, which does not necessarily curtail a good and a vibrant public debate since politics is about ideological contests. This study seeks to go beyond polarity as the main cause of the decline in journalism standards in Zimbabwe by extending it to the damaging process of the tabloidisation of the press. The tabloidisation of the press has been defined as "the tendency by all the media to adopt tabloid-style to reduce critical arguments to mere rhetoric" (Thusu 2007:8).

As noted earlier, polarisation does not necessarily lead to decline in standards if the media practitioners support their ideas with facts. What is critical in the Zimbabwean setting is to assess why standards of journalism are described as declining albeit in a polarised environment. This research seeks to establish whether or not tabloidisation is the reason for the decline in journalism standards in terms of truth telling, accuracy, independence, fairness, impartiality, humanity and accountability through an analysis of the coverage of selected events such as the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF and government. This study focuses on three national daily newspapers in Zimbabwe from the three leading newspaper stables across the ownership divide: *The Herald* (state-controlled newspaper - Zimpapers), *Daily News* (privately-owned - Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ)) and *NewsDay* (privately-owned – Alfa Media Holdings (AMH)). The three newspapers extensively covered the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF and government. An assessment of the coverage by the selected newspapers will suffice to make a conclusion on whether or not the decline in journalism standards can be attributed to tabloidisation.

## **1.1 Purpose of the study**

The principal concern of the study is to assess whether or not the perceived decline in the standards of journalism in Zimbabwe is a result of tabloidisation. The study is carried out in response to the ever-growing concerns about the decline of the standards of journalism in Zimbabwe notably by the government and like-minded media scholars and analysts, on the perceived failure to promote a healthy and vibrant public sphere in which socio-economic and

political developments can be debated. Tabloidisation is considered to be a contamination that leads to a decline in journalism standards when the quality press adopts tabloid styles in their news writing and presentation (Esser 1999, Franklin 1997, Bird 2000, Sparks 2000). Tabloids are known for pandering to the lowest common denominator, that is trivialisation, sensationalism, concentrating more on scandals, news of shock value; gossip and infotainment (Örnebring and Johnson 2004).

The centrality of the role of media in politics, especially the traditional role of informing citizens about public affairs, is seriously threatened if the quality media becomes tabloidised. The media has an indispensable role in not only informing but interpreting societal issues. More critically, the media is also a source of definitions about reality, and its conduct must always be brought under public scrutiny especially in terms of objectivity and impartiality

## **1.2 The expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF and government.**

This research is a case study of the coverage of Joice Mujuru by the three selected national daily newspapers. It is critical in this study to provide a brief outline of who Joice Mujuru is and the allegations she was facing from her former party ZANU PF. Joice Teurai Ropa Mujuru, (born Runaida Mugari on 15 April 1955) is a liberation war heroine in Zimbabwe's war of independence. She was married to Solomon Mujuru (a war hero and army general) until his death in 2011. Joice Mujuru served in the ZANU PF government in various capacities, including being a cabinet minister until she was appointed the first female vice president in independent Zimbabwe in 2004. This was a milestone for all women in the political arena. Mujuru was perceived by many to be President Robert Mugabe's natural successor. In April 2015, she was expelled from the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) party, in which she was the Second Secretary, on charges of plotting to topple the party leader and Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe from power. The allegations against Mujuru from the ZANU PF party were as follows;

- Plotting to unconstitutionally remove President Robert Mugabe from power.
- Causing divisions and orchestrating factionalism in the ruling ZANU PF party.
- Creating competing centres of power in the party.
- Corruption and extortion.
- Criminal abuse of office.
- Providing leadership for the regime change agenda (*The Herald* 03 April 2015)

The expulsion of Mujuru from ZANU PF and government was extensively covered by the mainstream print and electronic media in general. Her expulsion presents an opportunity to assess whether or not the selected newspapers adhered to broadsheet journalism or adopted tabloid journalism styles in its coverage. From the analysis of the coverage, it is possible to establish whether or not the media is undergoing the damaging process of tabloidisation which in itself points to a decline in standards of journalism (Bird 1992, Sparks 2000 McNair 2001).

### **1.3 Relevance of the topic**

A study on the tabloidisation of the media is critical, especially in the Zimbabwean setting where there are concerns over the declining standards of journalism. This study is important in light of the fact that tabloidisation is linked to a contamination of the quality press with the tendency to focus more on entertainment at the expense of critical issues to do with politics, economics, health and other important societal issues (Sparks 2000). Tabloidisation has been described as a negative development by journalists, media critics and academics and audiences to characterise an undesirable trend in the mass media marked by an increasing focus on sex, scandal and sensation in news coverage (Esser 1999, Johansson 2007). This study attempts to determine whether or not the decline in journalism standards in Zimbabwe can be attributed to tabloidisation. This is an important topic in communication, especially in terms of political communication and the function of the media in promoting democracy. The study on tabloidisation is critical especially in view of the fact that with most restrictions to voting having been removed, the media now plays an indispensable role in the formation of public opinion and on how citizens express their right to choose leaders (McNair 2011: iv).

Media has important roles to play in society and those roles must be conducted in a credible manner. This is more apparent especially considering that the right to credible information is a fundamental human right as people need to make informed decisions based on what they learn from the media. If the quality press is tabloidised, the implications for citizens are dire especially as they look to the press for information and education.

If, in the Zimbabwean setting, the traditional role of the press is being played by a quality press with a ‘tabloid-tainted’ news agenda whose sole purpose is to provide “a superficially apolitical, entertainment led news agenda (McNair: 1998:114), then such a situation presents a serious challenge which warrants intensive investigation and possible corrective action.

## **1.4 Relationship of the topic to the discipline of communication.**

The topic on tabloidisation is related to media studies, journalism studies and political communication which are central to all political activities in any society. All these fields of study deal with how power and resources are distributed in society. As such media reportage on political issues is crucial in their roles as the public sphere or spheres in the Habermasian perspective as the media supplies information in; “communally accessible communicative spaces in which information, ideas and opinions can be debated and exchanged as a pre-condition for rational collective decision making” (McNair 1998:21).

In this respect, the quality press should report political issues in an objective manner with all subjects of news stories giving their input, with facts separated from opinion and validation of facts by making reference to authoritative others. If the quality press adopts tabloid formatting and reporting styles, objectivity is lost and the educative and informative function is further diluted, can lead to a less rational and uninformed citizenry.

## **1.5 Broadsheet newspaper journalism**

The discussion on the tabloidisation of the press requires an understanding of the meaning of the term “broadsheet” as opposed to tabloid journalism. The understanding is critical so that the different journalistic styles can be clearly understood. Broadsheets are a large newspaper formats which are written and distributed for a national audience on the basis of a national news agenda (Franklin et al 2005:29-30).

Broadsheets value traditional flavour of a mix of politics and diplomacy with sport on the back pages. The major aim of broadsheets is in-depth and comprehensive coverage, which is written using moderate and emotionally controlled language (Ibid: 30). They tend to lead on an issue or substantive consequences of a story rather than first hand human interest approach employed by tabloids.

As such broadsheets are text heavy rather than the more pictorial tabloids and they are less inclined to use more unconventional reporting practices such as door-stepping or paying for stories. This character of broadsheets news coverage, tone and the characteristics of its readers, which are the more affluent groups in society, have resulted in them being regarded by both journalists and readers as the epitome of journalistic excellence (Franklin et al 2005:29-30).

*The Herald*, *Daily News* and *NewsDay* are representative of typical broadsheet journalism newspapers in Zimbabwe. In this regard the newspapers should be measured by the high standards associated with broadsheet journalism newspapers and as the epitome of journalistic excellence. This study seeks to assess whether or not *The Herald*, *Daily News* and *NewsDay* exhibited these high standards in the coverage of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF and government.

## **1.6 Tabloid journalism**

Any discussion on tabloidisation naturally calls for an in-depth understanding of the explicit nature of tabloids and tabloid journalism. Sparks (2000) defines the a tabloid newspaper as;

...a form marked by two major features. It devotes relatively little attention to politics, economics and society and relatively much attention to ... sports, scandal and popular entertainment. It devotes much attention to the personal and private lives of people both celebrities and ordinary people, and relatively little to political processes, economic developments and social changes (2000:10).

Another tabloid critic, Bird (2000) further defines tabloid journalism as the

storytelling news style which focuses more on personalities, dominant usage of visual images, and preference for sensationalism instead of analysis and rational descriptions, techniques such as dramatisation, photo-enhancements and re-enactments (2000:215).

From the definitions proffered by Sparks (2000) and Bird (2000) it therefore follows that tabloid journalism is closely related to topics such as sensational crime stories, astrology, television, gossip columns about personal lives of celebrities and sports stars and junk food. Tabloid journalism is also associated with tabloid-size newspapers while the terms “tabloids”, “supermarket tabloids”, “gutter press” and “rag” refer to the journalistic approach of such newspapers rather than the size. It is important to note that the term “tabloid” is used more often as a concept than in physical reference to the more compact size of tabloid newspapers as noted by Örnebring and Jonsson (2004) who argue that the tabloid press is;

Synonymous not only with a specific paper format but also with a certain way of selecting and presenting news. From the very beginning, the tabloid press was criticised for sensationalism and emotionalism, for oversimplification of complex issues, for pandering to the lowest common denominator and sometimes outright lies (2004:287).

From the above quote it is clear that some of the distinguishing characteristics of tabloid styles and techniques include sensationalisation, fake news, deception, heightened emotionalism,



obscurity, disregard for media ethics, especially privacy, and more visual imagery. Of particular note is that the content of tabloids is usually meant to cater for a section of the audience that does not need or demand serious content (Bird 1992). The success of tabloids over the years (mainly in the Western world) with its focus on meeting the needs of individuals as consumers is interpreted as a sign that it may contribute very little or nothing to the life of citizens (Sparks 2000). Tabloid journalism has also been described as the changing journalistic mood which has seen the news media become part of the entertainment industry rather than being a forum for informed debate about issues of public interest (Franklin 1997). The confusion of broadsheet and tabloid subjects has led to fears that broadsheet journalism and tabloid journalism will become indistinguishable and resulting in dumping down or tabloidisation (McNair 1998).

### **1.7 Objectives of the study**

The main objective of the study was to establish whether or not the decline in journalism performance and standards in Zimbabwe can be attributed to tabloidisation.

The specific objectives of the study were to;

- Establish forces motivating the tabloidisation of political news and discourses in contemporary Zimbabwe.
- Examine whether the framing of Mujuru's expulsion from ZANU PF in selected newspapers was based on factual or sensational reporting.
- Evaluate the standards of journalism in Zimbabwe, focusing on the framing of Mujuru's expulsion from ZANU PF in selected newspapers; *The Herald*, *Daily News* and *NewsDay*, as a point of reference.
- Establish which newspaper exhibits the worst effects in terms of tabloidisation and the probable reasons

### **1.8 Formulation of the research problem**

The standards of journalism in Zimbabwe have been described by media experts, government officials and the general public as declining, with accusations that the media is failing to play the traditional role of informing, educating and entertaining in spite of the un conducive political environment. Various factors have been cited to explain this trend notably decline in journalism training standards, polarisation, corruption, proprietary interference and unethical journalism practices among other issues (Media Ethics Committee 2002, Mano 2005, GPA

2008, VMCZ 2013, and IMPI 2014). The government sponsored Inquiry into the State of the Information and Media Industry in Zimbabwe (IMPI) neither alluded to nor mentioned or referred to possible explanation for the decline in journalism standards. This study thus seeks to establish whether or not the decline in journalism standards can be attributed to tabloidisation.

### **1.8.1 Formulation of the sub-problems**

From the research objectives, the research questions are as follows:

- How did *The Herald*, *Daily News* and *NewsDay* frame the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF and government?
- To what extent was the expulsion of Joice Mujuru sensationalised in the three selected newspapers?
- What are the main forces leading to the dearth of serious/factual reporting and exacerbating tabloidisation of political news in Zimbabwe?
- Which of the three papers *The Herald*, *Daily News* and *NewsDay* best illustrates the worst effects of tabloidisation and why?

## **1.9 Methodology**

The research employed a qualitative methodology which allows the researcher to gather all the information that best answers the research questions and satisfies the objectives of the study. The justification of electing to use a qualitative research methodology is on the basis that it enables the collection of a lot of data, capturing of all elements of an event to allow for a full description (Becker 1996, Sandelowski 2000). Data analysis in this study was done through qualitative content analysis (QCA) of the framing of the articles from selected newspapers. Qualitative content analysis is “an approach of empirical, methodological analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytic rules and step by step models without rash quantification” (Mayring 2000:2).

QCA was selected because it is reflexive and interactive in the treatment of data and allows the researcher to move further in the domain of interpretation by looking at the latent content. Complimentary data was collected through unstructured in-depth interviews to validate data obtained from qualitative content analysis of newspaper articles. In this research, I have selected a case study. A case study is an in-depth analysis of a system which is bounded by

time and or place or single or multiple cases over a period of time, it involves a process, activity, event programme or individual or refers to a period of time rather than a group of people (Creswell: 2003). The basis of selecting a case study is that it offers an opportunity to learn about the tabloidisation of the political news discourses in Zimbabwe as a whole (Stake: 1995).

### **1.10 Importance of the study**

The study of tabloidisation is important because of the central role of media in any society in terms of informing people as citizens since they cannot be everywhere where events are taking place. The media is one of the primary sources of information on important issues in society. The media defines and interprets the important issues and events especially with regards to how to understand them (Hall 2000). Furthermore, news also offers a way to understand the social world as well as the values, routines and conventions of the news journalist (Carey 1998). Therefore because of the indispensable role the media plays in society, a study on the performance of the media and tabloidisation is of utmost importance.

### **1.11 Anticipated contribution of the study to the discipline of communication**

This study is critical in that it will bring new knowledge on media performance in terms of the alleged decline of the standards of journalism in Zimbabwe. It will reveal the real state of journalism in Zimbabwe and its potential to contribute to societal needs. By investigating the declining standards of journalism and the tabloidisation of news, this research will establish the extent to which media in Zimbabwe can or is lacking in terms of supporting the informational needs for a society in which news can be trusted in forming opinions.

The study is also critical because society is both the source and destination of news in such a way that journalism is inevitably involved in the exercise of power. This is not just about the power of governments, propagandists and advertisers but also the fact that all agencies that operate in the public sphere are vulnerable to reactive effects caused by information circulated publicly and outside their own control (McQuail 2013).

### **1.12 Organisation of the study**

**This study is divided into 7 chapters as outlined below:**

#### **1.12.1 Brief chapter outlines**

**Chapter 1: Introduction** – As the introductory chapter, it deals with the following issues; background to the study, context of the study, purpose of the study, relevance of the topic, goal

and objectives of the study, formulation of the research problem and sub problems, the research design and methodology, chapter outline and a summary of the whole chapter.

**Chapter 2: Extended literature review** – The chapter extends the review of related literature on tabloids and tabloidisation from a global to a local perspectives in order to bring out the gap in terms of scholarship which this study seeks to fill and extend.

**Chapter 3: Research Methodology** - Justifies and discusses the methodology and research design employed in the study. The research methodology is qualitative, and qualitative content analysis is the instrument of analysis of newspaper articles, editorials and cartoons.

**Chapter 4: Presentation of findings** – **This chapter** presents the findings from the analysis of articles from *The Herald* newspaper and in-depth interviews in terms of tabloidisation.

**Chapter 5: Presentation of findings** – The chapter presents the findings from the analysis of articles from the *Daily News* newspaper and in-depth interviews in terms of tabloidisation

**Chapter 6: Presentation of findings** – **This chapter** presents the findings from the analysis of articles from *NewsDay* newspaper and in-depth interviews in terms of tabloidisation

**Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations** – The chapter concludes the study in terms of the major findings in relation to the research questions and offers recommendations based on the findings from the study.

## **1.13 Conclusion**

As the introductory chapter, this chapter has provided the background to the research, which is the perceived decline in standards of journalism by government, media academics and civic media groups. A brief outline of the case under study (Joice Mujuru's expulsion from ZANU PF and government) was also provided. In addition to this, the chapter also articulated the purpose of the study, relevance of the topic to the discipline of communication, including the methodology that the study employed and its justification. Important aspects of tabloid and broadsheet journalism were also outlined so that a comparison would be made in terms of tabloidisation of the media. A brief outline of the contents of each chapter was also made.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **EXTENDED LITERATURE REVIEW: TABLOIDISATION, JOURNALISM STANDARDS AND THE ZIMBABWEAN MEDIA LANDSCAPE**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the various debates on the meaning of tabloidisation in media studies in the context of Zimbabwe. The first part of this critical review will focus on critics who have written on tabloidisation. The second part explores the links between tabloidisation and the media environment in Zimbabwe. The chapter argues that journalism performance and standards are declining and that this decline leads to and manifests as tabloidisation. To support this perspective, this chapter is guided by three theoretical perspectives namely Media Framing Theory (Entman 1993), Habermass' (1989) concept of Public Sphere and Agenda Setting function of the media (McCombs and Shaw 1972).

#### **2.1 Theoretical Perspectives**

##### **2.1.1 Media Framing**

Stories in newspapers are framed and come to the readers as mediated realities. The degree of framing leads to different genres of media representation strategies. Tabloidisation can be considered as a form of framing human experiences. According to Butler (2009), a frame is a theoretical window through which reality can be understood. Frames can only contain certain facts and not others. Framing suggests that newspapers can project certain realities as natural or the only valid. This is a process that leads to the suppression of facts that are not included in the frame. In other words newspapers stories do not contain all that is knowable or can be known in human experiences. However, sometimes the framing of newspapers declines in such a way that it simplifies complex realities and in the process distorting possible and critical ways of understanding the polyphonic nature of stories. The framing of a news item or visual composition of a newspaper layout is meant to achieve a definite purpose from the creator's point of view. All news items are by nature framed or are frames of depicting mediated social reality (McQuail 1994). What remains key is the real motive behind the framing and what conclusions that framing produces.

Goffman (1974) outlines that framing consists of a schema of interpretation, collection of anecdotes and stereotypes that individuals rely on to understand and respond to events. Media

framing is a form of schemata of interpretation which is meant to enable individuals to locate, perceive, identify and label occurrences or life experiences. Entman (1993:51) improved Goffman definition to include that;

. . . to frame a communication text or message is to produce certain facets of a perceived reality and make them more salient in such a way that endorses a specific problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and or treatment recommendation.

Media framing manifests in the form of media discourses which enable individuals to construct meaning and public opinion (Gamson and Modigliani 1989). In order to understand how and why framing occurs in the media, framing, agenda-setting, priming and bias should be looked at together. On one hand, agenda-setting is the first function of framing by deciding what is worth of attention, while priming is the goal or the intended effect of strategic actors framing activities (Entman 1993). News frames determine what is selected, excluded or emphasised. The decision emanates from the originator's subjectivity on any issue and is far from being an objective list of facts and figures.

Agenda-setting - the capacity of the media to influence what people think about (McCombs and Shaw (1972) in news, affects learning and evaluations of issues and events, both at individual and societal levels. At the individual level, framing may result in altered attitudes about the issue due to exposure to certain frames while at the level of society frames contribute to the shaping of social processes such as political socialisation, decision making and collective actions (de Vreese 2005).

On the other hand, news frames are persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation and presentation of selection, emphasis and exclusion by which symbol handlers routinely organise discourse (Gitlin 1980). Frames are also interpretive packages that give meaning to an issue through a central organising idea or a frame for making sense of relevant events (Gamson and Modigliani 1989:3).

Tankard (2001:101) provided focal points for identifying and measuring news frames such as headlines, sub headlines, photos, photo captions, leads, source selections, quote selection, pull quotes, logos, statistics and charts, concluding statements and paragraphs. These focal points are important in the study of tabloidisation as they will show whether a news story is framed in a less serious, storytelling news style which focuses more on personalities, dominant usage of visual images and a preference for sensationalism, dramatisation instead of analysis and

rational descriptions or in-depth and comprehensive coverage written using moderate and emotionally controlled language.

### **2.1.2 The concept of the Public Sphere**

The concept of the public sphere is critical as presenting news in a less serious way is perceived to be damaging the public sphere by “transforming journalistic culture from a source of mass enlightenment and civic empowerment to a cause of mass pacification and intellectual degeneration” (McNair 2001:08). By “pacification” and “intellectual degeneration,” McNair implies that tabloids make readers less critical of what they read and depict them as gullible or cultural dupes (Hall 2006).

In its ideal form, the Habermasian public sphere is conceptualised as a forum or arena that mediates between state and society, where private individuals can critically debate public affairs, interrogate political assumptions on the authority of the state and call all those in power to justify their positions before an informed and reasoning public.

According to Dahlgren (1995):

Habermass conceptualised the public sphere as that realm of social life where the exchange of information and news on questions of common concern can take place so that public opinion can be performed... since the scale of modern society does not allow more than relatively small numbers of citizens to be co-present, the mass media have become the chief institution of the public sphere (1995:7-8).

The function of news in society is that it should allow citizens to make informed decisions, creating a mediated public sphere or spheres. This role is negated through simplifications within newspapers such as tabloids that reduce the media to an arena for spectacle, presented mainly as entertainment, distracting the public from important issues and concentrating on the sensational and individual matters (Grisprud:2000). HomiBhabha (1990) suggests that spectacle is based on projecting a single dimension and suppression of potential multiplicity of the possible narratives that could have provided credible meaning of events. This view is supported by Sparks (1998) who maintains that tabloidisation entails reporting economic and political issues in a personalised and trivial form. This transforms even the most significant matters into mere entertainment. Sparks elaborates that in tabloidisation:

... first of all, a process in which the amount of and prominence of material concerned with public economic and political affairs is reduced within the media, it is secondly a process by which the conventions of reporting and debate make immediate individual experience the prime source of evidence and value (1998:07).

In the above sense, tabloidisation makes the media fail to provide the vital information which is necessary for the functioning of the public sphere, putting democracy at risk as there will be a less informed citizenry (Franklin 1997).

### **2.1.3 Agenda-Setting**

The central theme of the agenda-setting function of the media is that the media has the power to determine what the people should think about. After studying media and foreign policy Cohen (1963:13) concluded that news “may not be successful in telling people what to think but it is stunningly successful in telling them what to think about”. Agenda-setting is the power of the media to push people to think about certain issues. Chari (2010: 132) extends the understanding of agenda-setting by arguing that “people do not only acquire information from the media but also learn how much importance to attach to any issue based on the level of emphasis it is accorded”.

In this sense, newspapers offer numerous cues on the understanding and interpretation of issues that the media gives prominence. Issues given prominence will ultimately become prominent in people’s minds (Ibid: 2010).

This study agrees with Chari’s argument that a tabloid can set agenda by using tactics and formatting news reports flippantly on issues that demand serious coverage and objectivity. The agenda-setting concept is key in the study on tabloidisation especially in relation to priming and framing of the whole issue. What can be asked is whether or not the stories about and on Joyce Mujuru are framed in a serious or tabloid framework and with what consequences.

## **2.2 Unpacking tabloidisation**

There is a multiplicity of interpretations of the term and the process of tabloidisation or dumping down of the media amongst media critics. A common trend that emerges out of the various interpretations offered by these critics is that the adoption of tabloid styles and formatting results in the perceived decline of journalism performance and standards through vulgarity, cheapness, sensationalism, focus on human interest stories, sex, scandals, gossip, mixing of news and entertainment, and trivialisation of important issues (Sparks 2000, Bird 2000, Bek 2004, Turner 2004). This study shifts the terrain of the above argument and suggests that these perceptions are simplistic in that there is an implication that tabloid reading is apolitical. There is evidence that tabloidised material can also engage in political debate



(Temple 2006, Barnet 1998). What may be viewed as tabloidisation may actually turn out to be an alternative way of reaching citizens particularly in contexts like Zimbabwe where citizens have endured more than two decades of a debilitating economic and political crisis. Besides, as critics of audience theories have made us aware, readers come to newspapers with their horizons of perspectives that may oppose the meanings intended in the tabloid (Morley: 1990). To further complicate the argument in this study I aver that the perceived decline in journalism standards is viewed mainly from the ideal functions of mass media in liberal democracies (Gripsrud 2000). This perception of the decline, which is viewed mainly through the lenses of liberal democracies, brings to the fore several challenges of applying the same standards to entirely different contexts. This points to the need for more critical, nuanced and refinement of the debate on the process of tabloidisation through studies in different environments.

This ambiguity presents challenges in that any critic who is not satisfied with new developments in the media may be quick to dismiss it as contamination of the media and therefore a form of tabloidisation without even considering the positives that the development may be associated with.

The conversion of news into the entertainment rather than as a forum for informed debate about important issues that concern the public has been described as the net effect of tabloidisation (Franklin 1997, Thusu 2007, Johansson 2007, Olkonen et al 2011). The attribution of the process of tabloidisation to commercial pressures to reach large audiences is mainly a Western concept as their newspapers started adding sections which had more emphasis on sport and entertainment, leading to the establishment of tabloid newspapers that produced news and information simply because of its “saleability” (Weiner 1998, Picard 1998). Such arguments are also very simplistic in that they assume that tabloidisation is solely motivated by the need to increase sales as there could be other motives.

This study will seek to move beyond these simplistic views by establishing the real motives of the tabloidisation of the media in Zimbabwe. Currently, there is no evidence to suggest that the emphasis on sport and entertainment will make the media reach wider audiences in developing countries like Zimbabwe.

Tabloids concentrate more on sex, scandal, entertainment and sensational news at the expense of issues such as economic developments, political processes and social changes leading to an apathetic and cynical society (Harris 2006, Franklin 1997, McNair 2001, Sparks and Tulloch

2000, Johansson 2007, Barnett 1998). The process of tabloidisation is not uniform among different countries (Thusu and Freedman 2003).

This study seeks to establish whether or not the decline in journalism performance and standards in Zimbabwe can be attributed to tabloidisation. More specifically is the issue of what senses do Zimbabweans make of what may be described as sensationalism, trivialisation, and tabloidisation or dumping down in other settings.

This study will draw from global experiences in the interrogation of the tabloidisation trend on the Zimbabwean scene while cognisant of the fact that different cultural and socio- economic environments produce different variations in terms of the degree of tabloidisation.

In the United States of America, Kurtz (1993) cited in Esser (1999) described the tabloidisation of American media as being characterised by an overall decrease in journalistic standards. This is followed by a decrease in the number of hard news articles such as politics and economics and an increase in soft news articles such as sleaze, scandal, sensation and entertainment, a general change of the media's definition of what they think the voters need to know to evaluate a person's fitness for public office (Ibid 1999).

Esser (1999) noted that tabloidisation is a process that takes place over a long period of time and should be examined in a long term perspective. The process of tabloidisation is not uniform as different environments can bring different results. This means that tabloidisation should be studied in a multi-dimensional approach using different sources of information. (Ibid 1999).

The analysis of Esser (1999) has its own shortcomings in that tabloidisation can be studied within individual countries without making any comparisons. His conclusions were based on a comparative analysis of tabloidisation in Germany and the United States of America but other studies by Pensar (2006) demonstrate that a study can be undertaken in an individual country. This study will investigate the trend towards tabloidisation by looking at a single event which can show whether tabloidisation is taking place or not in Zimbabwe.

At the macro level, it is a social phenomenon "both instigating major changes to the constitution of society, attaching less importance to education and more to political marketing, resulting in an increase in political alienation" ( Esser 1999: 293).

## **2.3 What are the real causes of tabloidisation?**

The lack of consensus on the interpretations of tabloidisation is reflected on its probable causes. Scholars have offered divergent explanations with others attributing tabloidisation to increasing commercialism and commercialisation of the media (Sparks and Tulloch 2000). Prioritisation of profits over the public service quest, leads to the abandonment of journalism standards with emphasis placed on the more attractive and entertaining stories, resulting in the marginalisation of objective journalism and critical issues (Esser 1999, Barnett 1998, McNair 2001). The downgrading of objective journalism and the upgrading of the sensational, trivial or infotainment through changes in content, layout and tone leads to the dumping down of hard news. This leads to a generalised, apathetic and cynical society (McNair 2001).

These multiple explanations to the causes of tabloidisation suggest that this area still needs to be explored further, particularly in the Zimbabwean context. Such a study is critical especially when there is a perception that standards of journalism and performance in Zimbabwe are declining (IMPI 2014, VMCZ 2013, Chari 2007, 2009, 2010).

## **2.4 Tabloidisation: The American experience**

In the American context tabloidisation has been attributed to the use of unchecked information sources, the success of American tabloid, falling circulation and ratings numbers which have led to the abandonment of objective journalism in favour of speedy gossip (Harris 2006). Tabloidisation is blamed for causing a “crisis of conviction” and a “philosophical collapse in the belief in the purpose of journalism and meaning of news (Kurtz et al 1998: 44-47).

Sparks (2000) identifies what he calls three “master frames” of social change in the developed world on the development of tabloidisation which have resulted in a change in media and their audience. The first frame is the high literacy level of the overall population which provides a market for “serious” newspaper consumerism. The second frame is the change in the structure of family and labour market with more women in education and employment, although women have been described as “reluctant purchasers of newspapers, “quality” or otherwise, compared to their male counterparts” (Sparks 2000:33). In this sense, such developments do not create a supportive environment for the “quality” press which had a male focus which would not simulate female interest or consumption (Harris 2006). The third frame is the growing dissatisfaction with the status quo among college graduates. As Sparks notes;

The positions of economic and social responsibility and leadership that were characteristic of the elite readership of the serious press are not shared by many of the new, educated employees (2000:33).

Intense competition among commercial news outlets forced editors and journalists to change and tailor-make their products to the needs of the clients.

There is no point preparing serious, well intentioned, high minded journalism if the audience registers its boredom by switching off. Thus entertainment is high on the list of news values both as an end in itself and as means to other journalistic ideals (Golding and Elliot 2000:635).

In the US tabloids are seen as a means of relieving stress, providing escape and earning money in the US capital system. These should not be taken seriously and mean no harm and is a legitimate form of press that is sold for profit like a book or a magazine (Bird 1992). While in the US elite newspapers pride themselves with covering the most dull and tedious stories and details, news consumers seek the opposite as noted by Sloan;

Consumers invariably have chosen shipwrecks over shipping notices, crime and carnage over commodity futures and whorehouse raids over wholesale price indexes. For them the more shocking news the better (2001:17).

Tabloidisation has been blamed for the declining reputation of the press as serious and helpful social institution (Merrill 1999) and providing fuel for dangerous populist flames (Sparks 2000). The adoption of tabloid tactics has been condemned for destroying the functions and purposes of journalism. As noted by Bird;

Tabloids and (Tabloidisation - my emphasis) represent a collective 'demon' that tells the journalist profession that what journalists do is a distinctly more noble enterprise (1992:106).

## **2.5 Critique of the American tabloidisation experience**

The American experience presents divergent perspectives on whether tabloidisation is causing a decline in the reputation of the press. These perceptions need to be interrogated in the light of the counter perceptions that news consumers have an entertaining import. This may suggest that those who are complaining about tabloidisation may be guilty of prescribing their own notions of what news must be, when the consumers of news are clear on what they want. Tabloidisation critics risk accusations of assuming that consumers of tabloidised content do not know what they want. The perception that audiences know what they want also falsely assumes that audience dictate content, which is not necessarily the case.

## 2.6 Is Tabloidisation “dumping down” or “reaching out”?

Critics of tabloidisation have been accused of failing to appreciate that the media might actually reach out or “dump up” when it presents information and news in entertaining ways (Barnett 1998). The debate on the “dumping down”, especially of politics, emerged with concerns about the conversion of broadsheets into tabloid or “broadloids” due to the way they reported news and what they choose to focus on.

This has led to debate on whether the ‘quality’ press is undergoing a process of dumping down a similar term for tabloidisation or a

derogatory term that refers to the simplifying of a subject towards the lowest common denominator – where news is simplified in order to make it more understandable to a large number of people (Temple 2006:257).

While simplification and sensationalism of serious news by journalists is presented as undesirable by tabloidisation critics, especially in terms of political reporting, Temple (2006) argues that dumping down of political coverage is not entirely negative since it provides alternative engagement platforms by engaging audiences that are normally unresponsive to purely conventional coverage of social issues.

A public sphere which mainly focuses on the rational and “high minded” coverage of politics has been dismissed as a grossly inadequate representation of how most people receive political knowledge and make judgements about significant issues in society. Temple (2006) advocates for a less elite driven news agenda which recognises the importance of the emotional, trivial and offers opportunities for political engagements with all sections of society. A political discourse that is oriented in terms of the centric public sphere is also seen as “truly anachronistic” (Yeatman 1994:113). These views suggest that tabloidisation can be empowering and thus more inclusive than the elite-driven news agenda. The bemoaning by political elites of the rise of infotainment is dismissed as unjustified as the public only exists when it is active and needs to be captured or engaged (Warner 2002:87).

Tabloid editors like, Sylvester Boham (Daily Mirror 1948-1953) dismissed the idea that sensationalism did not mean a distortion of the truth but rather;

. . . the vivid and dramatic presentation of events so as to give them a forceful impact on the mind of the reader. It means big headlines, vigorous writing, and simplification. Every great problem facing us... will only be understood by the ordinary man busy with his daily tasks if he is hit hard and often with the facts. Sensational treatment is the

answer, whatever the sober and ‘superior’ readers of other journals may prefer (Marr 2003:96).

Sensationalism is what tabloids are known for and this should not be part of a quality press that concentrates on serious issues as this has potential to leave out important issues at the expense of those which have greater appeal. Sensational treatment means that the more dramatic aspects will be amplified as opposed to the informative part and this may result in the essence of the message being lost or being trivialised. Sensationalism will only apply when the facts being presented are sensational in nature, when they are not, it means this sensation has to be created resulting in the distortion of the facts. This simplification of information reduces the seriousness of important issues and falsely assumes that audiences are able to deconstruct and glean the facts from the sensation.

## **2.7 Tabloidisation indicators**

The lack of a common definition and criterion on tabloidisation is reflected in the multiple ways in which the process can be detected. A quantitative study of the changes in British newspapers from 1952 to 1997 by McLachlan and Golding (2000) brought to the fore some of the tabloidisation indicators such as fewer international news stories, an increase in pictures and decrease in text, upsurge of human interest/entertainment stories and a decrease in political and parliamentary news stories.

Some of the indicators that have been suggested include de-contextualisation and personalisation and simplification of complex issues. This leads to a limitation on the ability of the reader to comprehend the issue presented (Boykoff and Mansfield 2008, Bird, 1992, 2000, Calabrese 2000). Other indicators include the promotion of emotion in news by exploiting human tragedy, replacing significant news with trivia, putting more weight on banalities and bizarre rarities, and less weight on in-depth analysis and political debate, (Bakkes, 1999). Tabloidisation is also marked by the visual composition of the newspapers such as dynamic layout meant to attract readers especially on the front page, easy readability, striking appearances, simplified journalism, sensationalisation and the use of bold types, colour and imagery. There is also a decrease in text, more visual photographs, tables and diagrams which lessen the amount of the text (Sparks 2000, Schonbach 2000). Overallly tabloidisation results in an overall decrease in journalistic standards punctuated by a decrease in hard news such as politics and economics and an increase in soft news such as sleaze, scandal, sensation and entertainment (Esser 1999).

## 2.8 Reviews of studies on tabloidisation in Africa

On the African media scene, there are fears that the concentration on sensationalism will corrupt the media and reduce its significance in development, which is viewed as a case of the bad pushing out the good. These fears have been noted by Kayode and Ridwan (2014) in Nigeria who believe that tabloidisation is taking over serious journalism practice through trivialisation. They argue that the tabloidisation trend has seen serious issues such as public affairs and politics, which are critical for economic growth, increasingly getting less attention compared to entertainment and gossip. In the Nigerian situation, Kayode and Ridwan (2014) conclude that there should be ethical adherence to enhance more professional practice.

Kayode and Ridwan's (2014) insights, though critical, are not backed by empirical evidence. This makes their validation a challenge and as such they remain mere perceptions. Although they used the Western template developed by (Sparks 2000, Bird 2000) and elaborated on by other scholars such as (Harris 2006, Franklin 1997) among others in their conception of tabloidisation, their argument focuses more on ethics and makes incidental references to tabloidisation. While Kayode and Ridwan (2014) make important insights which can be interpreted as tabloidisation, they make generalisations of the Nigerian media scene which is inappropriate as a detailed study still needs to be conducted. This research goes beyond such general statements by looking at the actual media content so that, at least on the Zimbabwean scene, the tabloidisation can be contextualised and analysed through specific newspapers.

Perhaps a closer and more recent study on tabloidisation on the African scene is by Ndirangu (2015) on the Kenyan tabloid, the *Nairobiian*. The study established that tabloidisation is on the increase in Kenya where focus is shifting onto entertainment, celebrity, sports scandal, nightlife, fantasy, space attacks, and personal lives of famous people. The result has been the prevalence of spin, bias, misinformation and lies due to tabloidisation.

The Kenyan study offers important insights on tabloidisation. These include the application of Bakkes' (1999) framework on tabloidisation in the African setting. The study managed to establish that tabloids contribute to an alternative public sphere, although they are emotional and sensational, by giving people an opportunity to tell their story and bring their struggles in everyday life in the public arena, the same arguments made by (Fraser 1992, Temple 2006, Fiske 1992, Barnett 1998).

Despite offering a pioneering and up to date analysis of tabloidisation on the African scene, Ndirangu studied a tabloid, which by design concentrates on less serious matters such as celebrity gossip, sex scandals and sensationalism, which offers limited analysis on tabloidisation. Ndirangu has missed the point and the study does not really tackle the issue of tabloidisation. His conclusion that tabloidisation is on the rise would have been more appropriate if the study was conducted on the quality press. What this calls for is an investigation into the tabloidisation of the quality press in Africa so that the debate on the declining standards of journalism through the adoption of a less serious approach to important issues can be ignited and be fully developed.

This study looks at the quality press from both public and privately owned press and will provide the necessary conclusions which may not necessarily be the same as those of the case of Kenya due to various factors ranging from the different political, and economic situations and other determinants. It will provide a more comprehensive picture on the performance of the media in Zimbabwe and establish the forces behind the simplification and sensationalisation of the news across the ownership divide.

In South Africa, Holt (2004) looked at the impact of tabloidisation of the South African press with a special focus on *The Cape Times* from 1976 to 2003. The findings were inconclusive but they revealed indications that tabloidisation was taking place, especially as there was evidence of a decrease in political coverage and an increase in human interest stories. Mbatia et al (2016) established that the definition and indicators of tabloidisation developed in the Western world are limited and narrow. In a study of the Kenyan broadsheet newspaper *The Standard* on the relationship between news content tabloidisation and political polarisation, they broadened the concept of tabloidised news to include ambivalent opinion, personalisation of official conflict and the use of public discussion forum approach to polemise concrete facts. This study is critical as it adds new dimensions to the tabloidisation debate in different contexts. However, the conclusions need to be tested by studying more elite newspapers and this is Mbatia et al's (2016) major limitation.

A study in a different environment like Zimbabwe on the leading daily broadsheet newspapers will likely confirm or dispute these conclusions since Zimbabwean media is operating in a politically polarised environment and has a different legal framework.



## 2.9 Studies on the Zimbabwean media scene

On the Zimbabwean media scene, no specific studies have been conducted on the tabloidisation of the press or news. Zimbabwean media critics such as (Chari 2009, 2010, 2007) have written extensively on the ethical challenges facing the Zimbabwean press, framing of the media discourses on land and the representation of the Zimbabwean crisis. Chari managed to highlight how the internet has directly or indirectly promoted unethical journalistic practices, plagiarism, activist journalism and invasion of privacy which have undermined the credibility of the media in Zimbabwe. Although his studies point to such issues as sensationalism and publication of falsehoods typical of tabloids and symptomatic of a tabloidised media, he however, did not specifically interrogate whether the decline of expected standards is due to tabloidisation or make any references to it. This again shows a glaring vacuum in terms of scholarship on the tabloidisation of the media in Zimbabwe.

Most of the studies on the Zimbabwean media concentrated on human rights, democracy and the media (Chiumbu: 1997), media performance (Mugari: 2004), and media regulation (Nyamanhindi: 2007) none of them looked at tabloidisation. This study seeks to fill this gap with special focus on the tabloidisation of the quality press, especially in terms of political news reporting and more importantly after the introduction of English language tabloids in 2009 in the form of *H-Metro* and *B-Metro*. Whether or not the introduction of these tabloids has led to tabloidisation of the broadsheet newspapers has also not been studied up to this point. Critics have been directed at the actual content of the tabloids themselves especially on issues to do with invasion of privacy, sexually suggestive content and sensationalism (Gadzikwa 2013, Mushowe 2012).

The closest study on the tabloidisation trend on the Zimbabwean scene, though limited was conducted by Mabweazara (2005) who noted that “tablodisation” was a new trend caused by the shrinkage of the private press. This trend manifested itself on the state-owned Zimpapers stable between the tabloid and broadsheet newspapers as snippets of sensational stories found their way into the broadsheets - *Chronicle*, *The Sunday Mail*, *Sunday News* and *The Herald*. Mabweazara attributed this trend to desperate attempts to attract readers;

. . . . given the attenuation of the press market owing to mainly political and economic situation compounded by the predictability of news items published in virtually all state-controlled newspapers (2005:32).

However, the focus was limited to *uMthunywa*, a weekly (*isiNdebele* tabloid) circulated in Matabeleland region. The tabloid offered something different in terms of its language use and sensationalism that debases the seriousness of hard news stories. On a positive note, the tabloid offered considerable attention to agriculture, education, health and housekeeping unlike the typical tabloid newspaper. But the study did not carry anything on politics, politicians and political parties – a charge that tabloids are often accused of.

Mabweazara contends that the tabloid offered an alternative to the “tired”, predictable and politically-skewed discourses that occupy the bulk of the space in mainstream media (2005: 32). This study is critical in that it highlights the tabloidisation trend, especially its spread to broadsheet newspapers which is presented as a form of contamination through the adoption of tabloid values. This trend has not been explored further and this study will build on this observation to assess whether the decline in journalistic standards can be attributed to the tabloidisation of the quality press. This study thus extends such initial researches by looking at the actual content of the broadsheet newspapers on the basis that it is of no use to study the tabloids as they are already tabloidised. The fears of tabloidisation are real as Mabweazara notes;

in Zimbabwe the prospects of readers becoming less interested in conventional hard news, and less critical of the techniques typical of the tabloid style, is glaringly significant (2005:32).

A study on tabloidisation on the Zimbabwean scene is critical especially in light of current perceptions by the government-sponsored Media and Information Panel of Inquiry (IMPI: 2013) report that standards of journalism are declining in Zimbabwe. The study of tabloidisation is also important because of the central role of media in society in terms of informing citizens since they cannot be everywhere where events are taking place. The media is one of the primary sources of information on important issues in society. It defines and interprets important issues and events, especially with regards to how to understand them (Hall 2000). News also offers a way to understand the social world as well as the values, routines and conventions of the news journalist (Carey 1998). Tabloidised news by nature fails to enlighten or teach the readers about the world and their place in it since the major focus is on entertainment and not on education. These could be the fears that media critics in Zimbabwe are pointing at while not being fully aware that the media they expect to serve is undergoing the process of tabloidisation.

This study takes a firm position that tabloidisation is not a form of popular empowerment but a negative kind of journalism which does not promote a vibrant and democratic society. This view is derived from the displeasure that currently has led media critics to allege that the standards of journalism are declining and failing to provide information that serves genuine interests of society as informers and educators.

## **2.10 Media Credibility**

With tabloidisation the credibility of the media suffers, resulting in citizens being sceptical about the information they will be getting from the media. A media that fails the credibility test is not objective and therefore tabloidised as news is presented in ways that do not allow individuals to be adequately informed about events on important societal functions such as health, politics and economics. A Media Credibility Index (MCI) conducted by the Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe in 2014 on *ZBC TV*, *Star FM*, *ZiFM Stereo*, *Studio 7*, *The Herald*, *NewsDay*, *Daily News*, *Zimbabwe Independent*, *The Sunday Mail* and *The Standard* showed serious flaws in political reporting.

The (MCI 2014) report noted that;

Most political stories particularly those on elections, parties, human rights and governance issues tended to contain various professional lapses. These included editorial intrusions, inflammatory language, and sensationalism, unclear sourcing patterns and bias among others. The impact of these lapses is that the stories produced tend to manipulate, distort or deprive the public of the ‘truth’. In many cases the failure by the media organisations to adhere to professional standards is the result of deliberate attempt to pursue particular interests at the expense of the truth (MMPZ 2014:3).

This points to an undesirable situation as the media may fail to avail credible, trustworthy and balanced information especially on political developments in the country and gravitating towards biased and sensational reporting, an observation also made by the IMPI (2014). Citizens need credible, trustworthy and reliable information as news organisations should report in a fair, impartial and professional manner instead of peddling half-truths and opinionated news disguised as facts.

The MCI report offers interesting insights into the performance of the mainstream press as out of the 1 093 stories it sampled 800 were rated favourably with a score of 3 and above out of a total of 6 while 163 had a score of 2 and 130 were poorly done. Of particular interest is the fact that out of the 130 poorly done stories 106 (82%) were on political reporting while the rest

were on social and economic issues. Furthermore, out of the 106 poorly done stories on politics 42 (32%) were from *The Herald*, the leading mainstream daily press in Zimbabwe, compared with the other dailies *Daily News* (5%) and *NewsDay* (3%) (MMPZ 2014:7-8).

In light of the subject under study – coverage of the Mujuru expulsion from ZANU PF – the MCI report noted that the dominance of poorly rated stories from *The Herald* was due to poor sourcing in the way the paper reported on the ZANU PF factionalism as it prepared for the 2014 December Congress. The reportage was one-sided and originated from sources that were critical of some ZANU PF members allegedly belonging to a faction led by former vice president Mujuru. Most of the subjects of the stories did not get the right of reply on the various accusations, ranging from abuse of office to attempts to remove or assassinate President Mugabe, incompetence and corruption.

## **2.11 Polarisation, Perception and Interference**

The most popular thematic committee of the IMPI inquiry was the Polarisation, Perception and Interference Committee. It noted that from the late 1990s the media in Zimbabwe was polarised as a reflection of the polarised environment in society. In terms of the media polarisation it noted that “perceptions spilled from the editorial and opinion pages to the selection of international news and columnists and into entertainment and sports coverage” (Ibid: 18).

While it was noted that polarisation is something about different perspectives there is need for professionalism and balance especially by giving both sides of these issues – something that was not taking place in the Zimbabwean media. Media polarisation was attributed to political influence, business interest, editorial policies and the bribing of journalists to give positive coverage to some politicians or business people, entertainers and sports personalities while lambasting others (Ibid :18).

The media in Zimbabwe was described generally as;

Manifestly corrupt and designed for disinformation, propaganda and information cover up across the spectrum. There is no longer a mass media publication of public record that is widely regarded as factual, with *The Herald* through the decade of the 1980s into the 1990s when opinion pages were fully separate to the news pages and clearly labelled (Ibid:19).

This admission points to a lack of basic journalism standards when the media is accused of being manifestly corrupt - a charge which makes the readers not to trust the media. This is a

sad description on the state of the media in the country where opinion is mixed with facts much like what tabloids do in order to maximise audiences.

## **2.12 The effects of polarisation on journalism standards**

The effects of polarisation have been described by IMPI as disastrous on the Zimbabwean moral fabric through the destruction of sacrosanct national values of tolerance, love, togetherness and peaceful existence, stifling of development, retardation of economic development by wasting resources, time and political space and promoting conflict and reducing media voices (Ibid:163).

In terms of media performance, polarisation resulted in partisanly selective media coverage which also compromised media standards. Compromised standards reflect a media that is tabloidised with bad practices pushing out the good (Esser 1999, Franklin 1997, McNair 1998, Sparks 2000). According to IMPI, these practices manifested themselves in the form of partisanship and sensational coverage which by their very nature restricted access by political parties to the media. The media was reported to be filled with reporting which is not objective and the production of stories that are meant to please funders and investors, self-censorship of journalists in the fear of offending political and economic interests of their owners, and acceptance of bribes from powerful and vested interests to suppress information from politics, business sports and entertainment (Ibid: 163-164).

To further highlight the effects of polarisation, the Community Newspaper Association (CPA) noted that polarisation has greatly destroyed the credibility of the media as a source of information, citing instances where different newscasts sourced from the same venue or event can extremely be conflicting to such an extent that it can confuse the public. The watchdog role of the media in this sense would be completely lost as all events would be interpreted from the:

... rosy speculations of politicians who desire to safeguard their political will and lifespan via media and by so doing the media becomes crucial in determining popular polarisation (Ibid;154-155).

## **2.13 Interference in media production**

Interference was identified as a rampant exercise in Zimbabwe with editorial charters being sidelined by newspaper owners and advertisers who literally dictate what they want the media to report on. This was revealed by an editor with a leading financial weekly *The Financial Gazette*, Hama Saburi who summed this rampant exercise by noting that;

We often hear of perplexing stories elsewhere where journalist are told what to write by their owners, where the 'diskette' journalism has taken root with diskette being brought into the newsroom and fed into news queues without any alteration, editing or verification of facts, where journalists participate in brainstorming sessions for political parties and thereafter guide the editorial line to be taken by their respective media houses in conformity with party agendas and where politics of the stomach is carrying the day. This is not good for the industry (Ibid: 166).

The major influences on these interferences have been attributed to severe economic pressures for the media organisations to stay afloat. This has led to deliberate lack of reporting of corporate scandals due to fear of alienating corporates, the sources of the advertising revenue that the media houses so desperately need to stay afloat. In such instances media proprietors would tell journalist which organisations they should not write about as doing so would mean that those corporates would withdraw the advertising revenue.

This situation results in the manipulation of news production processes by powerful corporates and interest groups, thus compromising the watchdog role of the press and converting them into public relations outlets.

## **2.14 Media corruption**

The most pervasive practice in the media in Zimbabwe was identified as bribe-taking which was the root of interference from politicians and businesspeople who pay journalists to influence media coverage. However such allegations have not been proven and are by nature difficult to prove. This was made worse by the fact that most media houses are struggling to pay salaries on time and have embarked on massive retrenchments due to the deteriorating economic conditions in the country. Bribe-taking is not limited to the business sections but all news genres including sport and entertainment.

Perhaps the most frightening fact is that IMPI findings on interference point to a perception by the public that the media is "manifestly corrupt and designed for disinformation, propaganda and information cover-up across the spectrum" (IMPI: 19).

Such a scenario led IMPI to recommend the de-politicisation of the media space and that journalists should use appropriate language when analysing political issues.

## **2.15 The IMPI report and the tabloidisation of the media.**

The IMPI report did not specifically point out the issue of tabloidisation of the media probably because it was not on its terms of reference. This indicates that there is still a gap in terms of

analysing whether the decline in media standards is due to tabloidisation or other factors. Since the inquiry sought to look into the state of the information sector in Zimbabwe mainly focusing on issues to do with professionalism, ethics, polarisation, interference among other issues, there is incidental evidence to suggest that the media in Zimbabwe especially the mainstream broadsheet journalism press might be undergoing the process of tabloidisation. This process could have started even before the introduction of the English language tabloids *H-Metro* and *B-Metro* and that the trend could actually be more entrenched after the introduction of these two tabloids, especially in an environment with declining fortunes and readership due to economic challenges.

IMPI notes that most Zimbabweans are of the view that the standards of journalism are going down mainly due to poor journalism training and mis-representation of stories on which the audience has first-hand information. The report also recommended retraining of editors, with some of them being accused of being obsessed with sex and witchcraft and pursuing only those stories that they believe will sell the newspapers and using banners that are sensationally crafted and screaming headlines which at times are not supported by facts in the body of the story ( IMPI:188).

The other aspects that were noted include lack of basic principles by the media in that there is no separation between news and opinion and more seriously allegations that in the Zimbabwean media “the responsibility for accurate articles that are factual is not a primary consideration” (Ibid: 190). This points to a typical tabloid technique of mixing news and information and disregard for accuracy in order to capture the attention of the reader or to emphasise only the dramatic elements of an issue for the sake of an emotional impact. Tabloids can choose to be one-sided if they think that is what will attract more readers, a practice which for broadsheets is a taboo. Tabloids can actually tell a news source what to say and how to answer questions or urge the interviewee to exaggerate some aspects to make the news more dramatic and appealing – a practice which the United States of America tabloid *National Inquirer* is famous for. In one instance a memo from one of the publishers of the *National Inquirer*, Generoso Popo instructed its writers to “pod, push and probe the main characters of your stories, help them frame answers and ask leading questions like ‘Do you ever go into a corner and cry?’” (Whetmore: 1987)

A disturbing feature of the Zimbabwean media is also the prevalence of unnamed and anonymous sources and analysts, which is a big dent on professionalism and journalism. The IMPI report notes that newspapers in Zimbabwe have developed a notoriety for publishing

articles crafted on the basis of information supplied by sources who refuse to be mentioned “even when they supply innocuous information” (Ibid:197). This practice greatly erodes the credibility of the media when journalists rely heavily on unnamed sources who are not easily recognisable as experts or knowledgeable on the subjects on which they speak or disclose information especially on sensitive or controversial issues.

Another weakness that was noted by IMPI on the part of the Zimbabwean newspapers is their over-reliance on “analysts” who may have limited knowledge on issues that they will be commenting on as sources and treatment of their analysis as factual news especially in terms of political reporting.

As alluded to earlier in this section, IMPI also refers to tabloid journalism practices though not mentioning it in the exact words by noting for example that;

. . . misrepresentation ,which is often coupled with sensational headlines has become an unfortunate phenomenon of Zimbabwe’s journalism and a cause for constant frustration among newspaper readers who have sadly come to a realisation that the stories appearing on front pages of Zimbabwe’s various newspapers do not always bear any resemblance to the sexy headlines below which they are printed (Ibid:198).

Although tabloid journalists claim to report on true facts, they may add some facts to capture the attention of the reader. For the broadsheet journalism newspapers this is a detestable practice as they should be objective and should never try to lure readers through sensational headlines which are detached from the stories below them. This results in loss of trust by readers who perceive the news stories to be an approximation of the truth about an event or issue.

This state of journalism in Zimbabwe casts doubts on whether it can be trusted in dealing with complex issues like the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF in an objective manner, which seems to confirm sentiments by then minister of Information Jonathan Moyo that if one expects to get information about the current political developments from the Zimbabwean media, one risks investing in complete ignorance.

This admission of declining journalism standards by IMPI suggests the need to investigate whether or not the media in Zimbabwe has become tabloidised as a possible explanation for the alleged decline in journalism standards or there are other factors.

Of special note is the fact that IMPI points to the fact that there is a dearth of meaningful sources, interesting and relevant news which journalists are using as an excuse to cheat the



public into buying products on false pretences. What needs further investigation is whether indeed there is a dearth of relevant news or that the media is now concentrating and has created a taste for trivia within the readers and is simply satisfying that by turning from broadsheet.

The area of tabloidisation has not been fully developed as it is still diffuse. While in the Anglo-Saxon world there is a perception that they were living in a period in which there is a sharp increase in the extent of tabloid type materials, especially in the late 90s. Sparks (1998:08) posed an important question arguing that “whether or not this is true or not either in these countries or elsewhere must be the central questions of any serious research programme in this field”. These perceptions in Anglo-Saxon as proposed by Sparks are now outdated as Sparks admitted that his work is now outdated and has very limited relevance to African situations. New insights in other parts of the world would greatly enrich and further refine the debate on tabloidisation. This suggests that the research has to be extended to different contexts. This study seeks to ask those serious questions in the Zimbabwean media scene where there are concerns that media standards are on the decline.

Bemoaning the falling standards of journalism in Zimbabwe by media critics and the IMPI is a case of research efforts that have been misplaced if not misdirected and thus fail to locate the real causes of the decline in a dynamic world where there are counter influences. This decline should be understood in terms of the tabloidisation of the media in an environment where there is fierce competition for a fickle and declining audience in a volatile political economic situation which has been on a downward spiral for more than two decades. This study seeks to fill this void in terms of scholarship in the declining standards of journalism in Zimbabwe in light of the tabloidisation debate.

## **2.16 Conclusion**

The chapter critically reviewed the critics of tabloidisation of the media from the global and local perspectives. What emerges from the critical review is that most critics of tabloidisation are not agreed on what it is although a common trend is that the process leads to the decline of journalism standards through the adoption of tabloid journalism formatting to other non-tabloid media forms. Those opposed to the view that tabloidisation is dumping down argue that the process can lead to enlightenment as previously excluded groups are reached and engaged and this enlarges the public sphere. Those audiences not reached by elite forms of presentation are reached out.

On the American scene, tabloidisation has been criticised for diluting media standards and has been described as a collective demon that is contaminating the press. However, it is a process that has become endemic as media houses have adopted tabloid formatting to reach wider audiences to ensure profitability. Critics have also developed various indicators for detecting the presence of tabloidisation. This study will employ some of these indicators on the analysis of the tabloidisation trend on the Zimbabwean media and establish new ones peculiar to the context. The review of the literature on the Zimbabwean media indicates a glaring gap in terms of tabloidisation thereby presenting the need to investigate the trend.

Critics on the Zimbabwean media and the state sponsored Information Media Panel of Inquiry (IMPI) show indicators of tabloidisation but do not delve much into the issue of tabloidisation. This again indicates a gap that needs to be filled. This study seeks to examine the decline of the standards of journalism in light of the tabloidisation trend as most studies have been conducted in foreign and mainly western contexts with limited studies on the African continent. The next chapter will focus on the research methodology employed in this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter discusses and justifies the research methodology used in this study. The analysis in this study is done through qualitative content analysis (QCA) of articles from selected newspapers. Qualitative content analysis is “an approach of empirical, methodological analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytic rules and step by step models without rash quantification” (Mayring 2000:2).

QCA has been selected because it is reflexive, interactive in the treatment of data and allows the researcher to move further in the domain of interpretation by looking at the latent content. This is unlike in quantitative methods which focus on the objective, systematic and quantitative description of communications manifest content (frequency and the means) (Berelson 1952, Sandelowski 2000). The other justification for using (QCA) is that it enables the coding and identification of themes and patterns in a systematic manner, coping with a large volume of data while at the same time being cost effective (Weber 1990, Morgan 1993, Cavanagh 1997, Altheide 1996, Wigston 2009, Strydom and Delpont 2005).

Complimentary data was collected through unstructured in-depth interviews to validate data obtained from qualitative content analysis of newspaper articles. In-depth interviews allow for the understanding of the experience and meanings that people make of an event, process phenomenon or activity. The focused and discursive nature of in-depth interviews allows the researcher and participant to fully explore an issue under investigation (Seidman 1998, Holstein and Gubrium 1995, Morse 1991). The research design, sample and sampling procedures, data collection methods and analysis are also discussed in this chapter.

### **3.1 Qualitative methodology**

The justification of electing to use a qualitative research methodology is on the basis that it enables for the collection of a lot of data, capturing of all elements of an event to allow for a full description (Becker 1996, Sandelowski 2000). This study drew on the qualitative research tradition rooted in multi-disciplinary academic endeavours which greatly recognises that whatever we see and perceive as reality in society is in fact a construction and subject to interpretation (Lindlof :1995).

In this sense, a study based on qualitative methods does not see reality as something that exists out there but that reality is continuously negotiated through social tools such as language (Weinreich 1996). Also, research using qualitative methodologies emphasises understanding social phenomena rather than simply explaining society in quantitative terms. This description of qualitative methodology is line with the objectives of this research which seeks to understand the tabloidisation of political news discourses in Zimbabwe.

A qualitative methodology allows the researcher to be actively involved since the researcher is part of the world being investigated. It is not possible to attain objective knowledge about a social phenomenon since the researcher is not divorced from the research process but brings in his or her experiences, background and cultural biases in the course of conducting the research (Denscombe 2002) This aspect of qualitative research does not however make the research findings biased as the analysis will follow a systematic process in the coding and analysis of data to counter these cultural biases.

The use of a qualitative research methodology is primarily focused on acquiring a detailed understanding of social processes and meaning. In qualitative research no individual or group is ever only an individual or group, each case is studied against a background of more universal social experiences and processes as noted by Denzin and Lincoln (2000:370) who argue that “to study the particular is to study the general”. It follows, therefore, that a case under study has the attributes of the universal and a reader should generalise subjectively from the case being studied to his own experiences.

On the Zimbabwean scene qualitative research methods have been extensively used and have proved to produce rich information derived from interviews, open ended questionnaires, document and text analysis, personal impressions and interpretations, observation and participant observation (Chari 2007, Mukundu 2010, Ncube 2014, Munemo 2016). This research builds on these successful endeavours to embark on a qualitative study of the tabloidisation of political news discourses in Zimbabwe and agrees with Chari’s (2016) sentiments that the challenges of qualitative research methods are largely circumscribed by the socio-political context in which the study is conducted.

### **3.2 Research Design**

In this research, I have selected a case study. The basis of selecting a case study is that it offers an opportunity to learn about the tabloidisation of the political news discourses in Zimbabwe as a whole (Stake: 1995). A case study is an in-depth analysis of a “bounded” system, which is bounded by time and or place or single or multiple cases over a period of time. It involves a process, activity, event programme or individual or refers to a period of time rather than a group of people (Creswell: 2003).

A case is also defined as an “in-depth look at a single event, people or social unit with the aim of shedding light on specific conditions” (Reinard 1998:351). In this research, studying of the particular is the study of the general because the particular case exists in a universal world. So by looking at a single case it is possible to understand the tabloidisation of political news discourses in Zimbabwe. In the context of this research, the case is bound by the individual (Joice Mujuru) involved and the political activities (expulsion from ZANU PF) over a period of time (October 2014 up to January 2017).

In exploring and describing a case, qualitative research directs that a researcher should use detailed and in-depth data collection methods which involve multiple sources of information that are rich in content (Fouche 2005). My research employed interviews and textual analysis (newspaper articles) which fall in the category of rich sources of information. The aim of a case study is to produce an in-depth description of a case or cases and situate the case within the larger context while the focus remains on the case or an issue illustrated by the case (Creswell 1998). The analysis of the coverage of the expulsion of Mujuru from ZANU PF is expected to shed light on the tabloidisation of political news discourses in Zimbabwe in general.

In a case study, unlike in grounded theory, the researcher enters the field with knowledge of the relevant literature before conducting the field research (Babbie 2001). The relevant literature that is critical to allow the researcher to enter the field has been extensively discussed in Chapter 2

### **3.3 Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)**

The study employed the qualitative content analysis method to analyse newspaper articles. Content analysis is a flexible method of analysing text data which can be used either as qualitative or quantitative (Cavanagh 1997). Qualitative content analysis is an approach of

empirical, methodological analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytic rules and step by step models without rash quantification (Mayring 2000:2) QCA is unlike quantitative content analysis in that it is a dynamic form of analysis of verbal and visual data that is oriented towards summarising the informational contents of that data (Morgan 1993, Altheide 1996).

The choice of qualitative content analysis in this study was informed by the fact that it allows both visual and verbal data to be examined. In addition to being cost effective compared to other data analysis methods, qualitative content analysis allows the researcher to cope with large volume of data in the understanding of social reality in a subjective but scientific manner (Patton 2002, Wigston 2009, Strydom and Delpont 2005).

Qualitative content analysis is unobstructive and non-reactive in nature as content from written documents like newspaper articles is studied in its natural state because when the stories were written there was no intention or anticipation that they will be objects of study (Wigston 2009, Strydom and Delpont 2005). On the other side, qualitative content analysis is limited to examining data that has been recorded in some other retrievable format (Wigston 2009). This weakness was solved by employing in-depth interviews to elicit data from a variety of informants.

As a research method, qualitative content analysis allows codes to be derived from the data and their systematic application in the course of the study as collection and analysis are done simultaneously and in the process shaping each other (Strydom and Delpont 2005).

Furthermore, qualitative content analysis is critical because it goes beyond merely counting words to examining the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identification of themes or patterns of the phenomenon under study (Weber: 1990, Downe - Wamboldt 1992, Hsien and Shannon 2005). This in line with this research as it is concerned with assessing the frames used in news coverage and how society responds and evaluates media performance.

### **3.4 In-depth interviews**

In-depth interviews were employed in this research because they have the advantage of immediacy and relational quality of affording considerable flexibility to the data collection process in terms of areas explored and the ability to clarify issues (Darlington and Scott 2002).

The flexibility of in-depth interviews in terms of probing complex issues, clarifying answers and obtaining sensitive information is aptly described by (Brenner, Brown and Carter 1985:3) who notes that;

Probably the central value of the interview as a research procedure is that it allows both parties to explore the meaning of the questions and answers involved. There is an implicit or explicit sharing and/or negotiation of understanding in the interview situation which is not so central and often present in other research procedures. Any misunderstanding on the part of the interviewer or the interviewee can be checked immediately in a way that is not just possible when questionnaires are being completed or tests are being performed.

Interviews are particularly useful when the phenomenon under investigation cannot be observed directly because the issue has already taken place (Taylor and Bogdan 1998). In-depth interviews are also key in finding out how people think and feel about a certain topic in the past or in the future, something that cannot be done through direct observation; they are the best way to access someone's perception (Darlington and Scott 2002). The interviewing of key informants indeed did reveal their perceptions on the coverage of the expulsion of Mujuru and shed light on the tabloidisation of political news in Zimbabwe as shall be demonstrated in chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Interviews can also give a false sense of accessing the past because interviews take place after events would have been reconstructed and participant's perspectives can only be presented in the context of the lives as they are being lived (Langress and Frank 1981). The other weakness of interviews is that they only allow access to what people say but not what they do. The only way to find out what "actually happens" in a given situation is through direct observation (Darlington and Scott 2002). However, these weaknesses of accessing the past were complemented by qualitative content analysis of newspaper articles that were written during the period under study and which remain in their natural state.

### **3.5 Data collection methods**

#### **3.5.1 Newspaper Articles**

Data collection method was in the form of different newspaper articles published on the Joice Mujuru issue at the height of the factional fights from October 2014 onwards up to the time she formed her own political, the Zimbabwe People First (ZPF), up until January 2017. At this time it was beyond doubt that Mujuru had divorced herself from ZANU PF and was an opposition politician ready to compete for political office. The newspaper articles were obtained from Harare Polytechnic Mass Communication department, Harare Polytechnic

Library, National Archives of Zimbabwe, which keep the hard copies and electronic copies from the websites of the newspapers under study.

### **3.5.2 In-depth interviews**

In-depth unstructured interviews were conducted with journalists, media academics, media freedom activists, retired editors, sympathisers of and detractors of Mujuru in the ordinary people both from selected urban and rural areas who follow the media closely and those who demonstrated the ability to provide meaningful responses. In this research, interviews were used to verify, validate and comment on data obtained from other sources and thus help in the efficiency in data collection (Wimmer and Dominick 1987). Interviews were critical in filling in the gaps, confirming and expanding on the findings from the qualitative content analysis of newspaper articles.

Structured interviews, though critical in comparative terms, were deemed inappropriate for this study as they would unnecessarily restrict the richness and the diversity of the data that was collected which did not expect straight-jacketed answers to such a complex issue like tabloidisation of political news discourses in Zimbabwe. In qualitative research projects, experience of the topic under investigation and articulateness are commonly regarded as essential criteria for the inclusion of participants (Wertz and van Zuuren 1987, Polkinghorne 1989).

The selection of the informants in this research was based on the principle that their role and perspective is functional and central to the research problem (Lindlof: 1995). Informants provided certain insights because some participated in the events and others were affected by the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF and government. The different informants that were selected offered a variety of insights because they had unique experiences and were able to give special articulation to the issue under study (Lindlof: 1995).

The focus of the unstructured interviews in this research was on the conduct of the press in terms of framing of the coverage of the issue under study. Interview data was recorded using notes and electronic mail for informants who were not domiciled in Zimbabwe. All the respondents in Zimbabwe expressed reservations on being tape-recorded especially with regards to the political sensitivity of the topic. This made the task of interviewing very taxing as note-taking became the only principal means of getting their views.



### **3.6 Purposive sampling**

This research employed a purposive sampling method by selecting the most productive sample that answered the research problem. The sample included articles from the newspapers under study and key informants. The basis for selecting a purposive sample is that it illustrates some features or processes which are of interest for a particular study (Silverman 2000:104). The purposeful selection of participants represents a key decision point in a qualitative study and the search for data in this study was guided by processes that provided rich detail to maximise the range of specific information that could be obtained from and about that context (Erlandson et al 1993, Creswell 1998).

A purposive sample was selected because it allowed for a sample that is composed of elements (news articles and key informants who were involved in the issue under study) that contain the most “characteristic, representative or typical attributes of the population” under study (Singleton et al 1998:134). The other basis for selecting a purposive sample was due to the fact that sampling techniques in qualitative studies do not depend on principles of random probability in which every population has an equal and independent chance of being selected but on purposeful selection (Miles and Huberman 1994, Patton 1990, Lindlof: 1995)). In this sense the selection is biased towards information “rich cases” (Patton 1990:196) which reveal the sense making process and strategies of interest to the researcher.

Qualitative sampling in general is purposeful because its practitioners strive to locate themselves at the sites of specific communication performances and practice which results in non-probability sampling methods being utilised, particularly theoretical and purposive sampling rather than random sampling (Strydom and Delport 2005). In the context of this research it was not possible to just pick newspapers at random but to select those which have the stories that need to be analysed and also to select informants who are able to articulate the issues by virtue of having participated in them or affected by the activity as outlined in Section 3.5.2 in this Chapter.

The use of non-probability sampling is also critical because qualitative researchers “seek out individuals, groups and settings where specific processes being studied are most likely to occur” (Denzin and Lincoln 2000:70). Qualitative data is derived from a single or multiple cases and these are most unlikely to be selected at random and a case may be selected simply

because it allows access (Silverman 2000). The above perspectives informed the rationale behind the sampling employed in this research.

### **3.7 Sample size**

In a qualitative research like this one there are no easy answers to the question of how many participants are required in a the study. The size is determined by both theoretical and practical considerations such as what one wants to find out and from whom (Darlington and Scott 2002; 51). This view is supported by Patton (2002) cited in (Strydom and Delport 2005: 328) who notes that in qualitative inquiry there are no rules for sample size as the sample size “depends on what one wants to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what is at stake, what will be useful, what will make credibility and what can be done with available time and resources”.

The actual sample size in qualitative research is determined as the study progresses up to the saturation point (Marshall 1996, Sarantakos 2000). The saturation point is a point in the study where the researcher begins to hear the same information being repeated and no longer learns anything new (Seidman 1998). The actual sample size up to the saturation point consisted of 222 newspaper articles (see Appendix 2, 3 and 4) and 19 in-depth interviews with key informants (See Appendix 7)

### **3.8 Unit of analysis**

Mouton (1996a:47-50) identifies various kinds of units of analysis or what are termed “furniture in the social world”. These basically refer to the “what” of the study – the object, phenomenon, entity, process or event which forms part of the study. The unit of analysis can be seen as “the person or object from whom the social researcher collects data” (Bless and Higson – Smith 1995:64). These can be an individual, individuals, groups, organisations (formal and informal), institutions, social actions, cultural objects and interactions or period of time.

The unit of analysis can also be modified to suit the general interests or the research goal. In this study, the unit of analysis is the newspaper articles from each of the national broadsheet journalism dailies namely *The Herald*, *Daily News* and *NewsDay* on the coverage of Joice Mujuru and her allies in the period October 2014 to January 2017. The other unit of study is in-depth interviews, which are the statements from what the informants will be saying on the coverage of the expulsion of Mujuru from ZANU PF.

## **3.9 Data interpretation and analysis**

### **3.9.1 Analysis of data from newspaper articles**

Data from the framing analysis of the articles was organised along tabloid formatting and styles and tabloidisation indicators and characteristics derived from literature review in Chapter 2, using qualitative content analysis. The analysis of the frames was based on looking at the following points for identifying and measuring news frames such as headlines, sub headlines, photos, photo captions, leads, source selections, quote selection, pull quotes, logos, statistics and charts, concluding statements and paragraphs (Tankard 2001). These focal points were instrumental in revealing whether the coverage of the expulsion of Mujuru was framed in a less serious storytelling news style which focuses more on personalities, dominant usage of visual images and a preference for sensationalism and dramatisation instead of analysis and rational descriptions or in-depth and comprehensive coverage written using moderate and emotionally controlled language. All the selected stories were analysed using an identical tracking protocol (see Appendix 1). Emerging patterns on the framing of Joice Mujuru were analysed in their relationship to tabloidisation of news. The study avoided the use of pre-conceived categories (frames) in order to allow the frames to flow from the data. This allowed new insights to emerge and not to be confined to already available categories derived from the indicators of tabloidisation (Kondracki and Wellman 2002).

Through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) a representative story for each frame from the selected newspapers was analysed. CDA allowed the study of the language and power in terms of discourse and ideology. The assumption was that in the news stories contain political goals or agendas which are biased towards a particular ideology especially in terms of choices in terms of quotes used, naming of sources, perspective from which the story is written, what is omitted which all form the overall portrayal by the story and the resultant frame (Johnstone 2008).

In doing CDA, the context was identified as critical with regards to the three levels; macro, meso and micro. The micro allowed for the examination of the issues at the time when the stories were written. At the meso level, focus was on the context of the production and reception of the stories while the micro level focus allowed for the analysis of the actual words used in the stories in terms of the linguistic devices used to depict the ideas (Caldas – Coulthard and Coulthard 1996, Richardson 2007)

A representative story was selected for analysis to reveal the salient aspects of each frame using four categories namely; words and symbols. The analysis of the article would reveal or identify the kinds of words and symbols associated with treatment of Mujuru at a particular historical time. Preferred meanings – which would reveal the intended meanings that a particular newspaper sought the audience to consider as natural or the only possible interpretation of a story were identified. Omission analysis assumed that a story is a construction which privileges certain meanings and not others. The gist of omission analysis was to explore what was left or remained unsaid, or silenced or prevented from manifesting because of a choice of particular words and symbols and not others that would have created possible alternative meanings. The implication of the fact that a story can say more from what it does not openly narrate than from what it says suggests that particular ways of reporting can limit debate over other possible views on the same story. The phenomenon of limiting debate thus implies a deliberate critique of what could have been left out in the story in the way the framing was done.

### **3.9.2 Analysis of interview data**

As noted earlier, interview data was collected through open-ended questions (see Appendix 6). Data analysis commenced while the interviews were still underway and a preliminary analysis at times dictated for the need to redesign the questions and focus on central themes during the interviewing process. What emerged at the end of the interviews was a much more detailed analysis after reading the data repeatedly and getting a sense of the whole, akin to reading a novel (Tesch 1990, Rubin and Rubin 1995).

Codes for the interview data were derived by reading the data word for word looking for themes and concepts that will build towards an overall explanation (Miles and Huberman 1994, Morgan 1993, Morse and Field 1995). Exact words that capture the key thoughts or concepts were highlighted; notes on the first impressions and thoughts were also made. All the material that speaks to a theme and concept were put together and comparisons were made to look for nuances and variations in meaning. This allowed for labels of codes to emerge that are reflective of more than one key thought. Categories were based on how different codes are related and linked. The emergent categories were then used to organise and group codes into meaningful clusters to discover connections between themes and concepts so that accurate and detailed explanations could be made in terms of tabloidisation of political news discourses in Zimbabwe (Coffey and Atkinson 1996, Patton 2002, Rubin and Rubin 1995).

### **3.10 Coding**

Data from the tracking protocol on newspaper articles was coded creatively by scanning the stories looking for the different frames. In so doing commonalities and differences were identified which in turn enabled the formulation of categories of interest, in this case (Charmaz 1983, Dey 1993). Coding was done through open, axial and coding. Open coding was done through breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising the data. This was followed by axial coding which enabled the data to be put together in new ways after the open coding by making connections between categories. In the end, selective coding allowed the selection of the core category and systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships and filling in categories that needed further refinement and development (Charmaz 1983, Glasser and Strauss 1967, Strauss and Corbin 1990).

### **3.11 Validity**

In order to ensure validity of the research findings, this study triangulated data gathering and analysis methods by using qualitative content analysis for newspaper articles and in-depth informant interview to enhance the validity of the research findings (Baker 1998). The use of several methods is important as “no single measurement is perfect, neither is any scientifically useless” (Webb et al 1966:177). Triangulation removes personal biases resulting from the use of single methods (Denzin 1970b). It also provides for more valid results by counter balancing strengths of each method (Jick 1979, Fortner and Christians 1981).

The validity of qualitative research is also judged by the fact that the methods used are reliable and “responsible conclusions are drawn from the research” (De Beer 1993:3). The validity of this research was enhanced by keeping notes and an audit trail of all the materials used. Qualitative data also has higher validity because it stays closer to the real meaning of social existence unlike research that produces numerical findings (Baker 1998). The methods that were used in this study are valid and reliable and conclusions are drawn from the research.

### **3.12 Ethical considerations**

In conducting interviews on a sensitive political topic like this one in Zimbabwe, a country characterised by intolerance and intra and inter-party political violence, I also made the protection of respondents from both physical and emotional discomfort that may emerge from participating in this study a top priority. Informed consent of respondents was sought after

explaining why the information is needed, that their participation is voluntary and are free to withdraw at any time of the interview (Bailey 1987, Baker 1988, Newman 2003, Babbie 1990, Correy et al 1993). I also safeguarded the privacy and identity of the respondents and acted in sensitivity where privacy is relevant including the handling of the information in a confidential manner (see Appendix 6). In this regard, I made it clear that there will be no direct attribution of all the information given in confidence (Yegidis and Weinbach 1996). There will be no compensation for respondents in return to agreeing to be interviewed. Possible manipulation or attempts to influence the course of this research from any quarter was not encountered in this study and credible results were obtained.

### **3.13 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed and justified the research methodology employed in the study to achieve the research objectives. The research methodology is qualitative which emphasises the understanding of the social phenomena as opposed to simply explain society in mainly quantitative terms. The specific methods of data analysis that were employed are qualitative content analysis and in-depth interviews. Data analysis strategies have also been clearly outlined in this chapter. The sampling was purposive so that the appropriate samples that best answer the research questions were used. A purposive sampling method was selected in line with qualitative research which uses mainly non-probability samples to allow the researcher to seek settings or groups where communication activities occur. The sample size was determined as the study progressed up to the saturation point. As the research involves human beings in terms of in-depth interviews key ethical considerations to be observed were clearly outlined. The next chapter will look at the data presentation based on the qualitative content analysis of the framing of the expulsion of Mujuru in *The Herald* newspaper.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: *THE HERALD* FRAMING OF THE EXPULSION OF JOICE MUJURU**

### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the analysis of the frames employed by *The Herald* in the coverage of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF. The chapter also assesses whether or not the framing employed tabloid news reporting techniques such as sensationalism, subjectivity, voyeurisms, trivialisation among others. This chapter evaluates the nature and consequences of using tabloid techniques such as sensationalism and trivialisation in the coverage of serious political issues in the country.

An analysis of *The Herald* articles from October 2014 to January 2017 reveals that the following frames; putschists cabal, traitor/economic saboteur, incompetent leader/simpleton, corrupt, false war legend, regime change agent and the greedy and cruel stepmother frame are given salience. The framing analysis in this chapter will borrow from the critical works of (Goffman 1974, Entman 1993, Butler 2009) who argue that framing is possible through the use of devices such as word choice, metaphors, exemplars, descriptions, arguments and visual images to deal with justifications, causes and consequences. To complicate my analysis, it shall also be demonstrated that these frames are not entirely confined to a single story but they intersect and overlap in individual stories and reinforced each other.

### **4.1 Putschists cabal frame**

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English Oxford (2010) defines a “Putsch” as “a sudden attempt to remove a government by force” and a cabal as “a group of people who are involved in secret plans to get political power”. The putschists cabal frame is derived from the depiction of Joice Mujuru as a leader of a putschist’s cabal which wanted to topple President Mugabe from power through a co-ordinated assassination plot and install Mujuru as the next leader. The putschists cabal framing is based on the activities of people described as Mujuru’s closest allies who are depicted by *The Herald* as the masterminds behind the assassination attempts on President Mugabe. These close allies are identified as ZANU PF politburo members Rugare Gumbo, Didymus Mutasa and Nicholas Goche who are the core members of the putschists cabal. To elaborate on this frame two front page stories entitled *Step down, war vets tell Mujuru and ...Mutasa also, say analysts 17/11/14* will be analysed.



# Step down, war vets tell Mujuru

Takunda Maodza in MASVINGO

WAR veterans have advised Vice President Joice Mujuru to seriously consider her position in ZANU-PF ahead of Congress to make their job easier at the elective indaba.

The war vets spoke in light of revelations linking VP Mujuru to elements covertly pushing to unconstitutionally oust President Mugabe amid revelations they were mooted assassination.

Two of the VP's closest allies — former ZANU-PF spokesperson Rugare Gumbo and Secretary for Administration Didymus Mutasa — have recently spoken of assassinating President Mugabe.

Gumbo was recorded making the assassination talk, and a report to party authorities of Mutasa saying President "Mugabe will be shot" was made.

Investigators also show that another senior VP Mujuru ally, a Cabinet minister from Mashonaland Central, made contingencies for such a scenario during recent meetings with potential hitmen in South Africa and Israel.

Analysts and legal experts say there was no way VP Mujuru can be separated from the intentions of her closest allies.

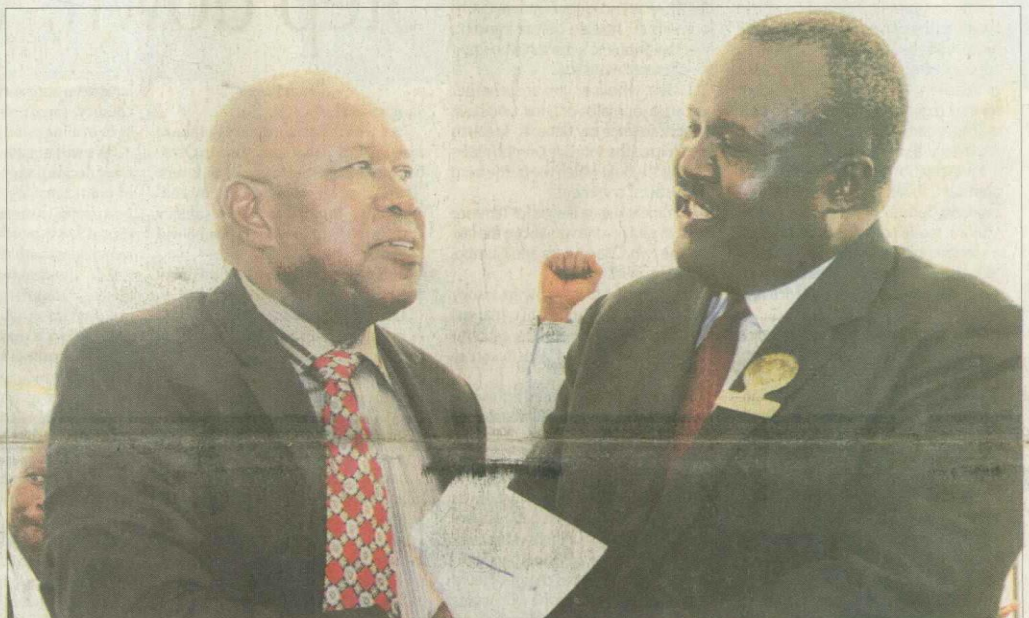
In their resolutions after a two-day elective congress at Great Zimbabwe that ushered in Ambassador Christopher Mutsangwa as the new Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans' Association chairperson, the war veterans said VP Mujuru should heed their call so as to make their job "easy at congress", a clear indication they want her to step down from her positions in the party and Government.

"We, therefore, call upon the Vice President of the party to seriously consider her status in the party well before the congress," said Cde Mutsangwa while presenting the resolutions. "Judging her position in light of what has been coming out, we look upon her integrity — if it is still there — to reconsider her position in the party."

The war veterans said President Mugabe has been "a lone soldier dealing with all these counter-revolutionaries some whose names we have just mentioned".

"We shall never again allow a stage where we are onlookers," Cde Mutsangwa said.

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Cde Christopher Mutsangwa (left) is congratulated by Chief's Council president Chief Fortune Charumbira after he was elected chairman of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans' Association in Masvingo. (See Page 2 for pictures of the new executive)

## ... Mutasa also, say analysts

Felix Share  
Herald Reporter

PRESIDENTIAL Affairs Minister Didymus Mutasa's plot to assassinate President Mugabe calls for the President to immediately fire him from his posts in the party and Government because as Presidential Affairs minister, his moral blameworthiness was very high as his ministerial portfolio has oversight on State security, legal experts and political commentators have said.

Police, the analysts said, should also be seized with the matter because Cde Mutasa and suspended party spokesperson Rugare Gumbo wanted to topple

a constitutionally-elected President using unconstitutional means which translates to treason.

Cde Mutasa's plot to assassinate President Mugabe emerged in last Thursday's Politburo meeting where party members heard that last month, the ZANU-PF Secretary for Administration boasted to one of his lovers that "if President Mugabe blocks the ascendancy of Vice President Mujuru to the Presidency at the ZANU-PF Congress, then he will be shot".

The lower immediately reported Cde Mutasa, who is a close ally of VP Mujuru, to the authorities.

In addition to what was reported

by our sister paper, The Sunday Mail, Cde Mutasa is reported by the source to have also said: "This time we (the Mujuru faction) are ready to show Mugabe at Congress that he has no support. So if he refuses to listen to us, we will take him out".

Another VP Mujuru ally, suspended party spokesperson Rugare Gumbo, was recorded making assassination threats: "Kana (President) Mugabe akaramba achipusha Mujuru out tichamubvisa sezvakaitwa (Laurent) Kabila." DRC's President Laurent Kabila was killed by a member of his security team in January 2001.

The analysts said Cde Mutasa

was literally getting away with murder given that while he had said "what", Rugare Gumbo who had said "how" had been given the boot; and while ousted Manicaland provincial chair John Mvundura had attended the abortive burial function where former war veterans chairman Jabulani Sibanda had made scandalous allegations against the First Family including threatening to march to State House with Cde Mutasa, it was Mvundura who had received a written reprimand.

Legal and political experts said yesterday that it was "hazardous"

• To Page 2



**Figure 1 Step down, war vets tell Mujuru**

# Step down, war vets tell Mujuru

♦ From Page 1

vangwa said.

Last week's Extraordinary Politburo meeting heard that sometime in October, Mutasa boasted to one of his lovers: "If President Mugabe blocks the ascendancy of VP Mujuru to the Presidency at the ZANU-PF Congress, then he will be shot."

Immediately afterwards, the woman reported the matter to party authorities.

The revelation shocked the Politburo — including members who have been backing VP Mujuru.

And this dovetails with a voice recording of Gumbo who is heard saying: "Kana (President) Mugabe akaramba achipusha Mujuru out richamubvisa sezvakaitwa (Laurent) Kabila."

DRC's President Laurent Kabila was killed by a member of his security team in January 2001.

The Daily News, which has for months been pushing the VP's agenda, on Saturday also reported as a matter of fact that Gumbo had been recorded making the treasonous statement.

Further, in August 2013 — two weeks after President Mugabe's resounding victory — VP Mujuru told the Daily News on Sunday in an interview at her Ruzambo Farm in Beatrice that she was ready to take over ZANU-PF and Government; saying: "We know that the President will soon be 90 and God might decide to call him."

The war veterans warned business against involvement in ZANU-PF politics by funding elements seeking to remove President Mugabe.

"Varikumhanya nanaKaukonde. From now onwards, that business is over," he said. "They are the ones who

have been sponsoring rebellion in this country. The patronage of business has been bribing politicians.

"We will not allow it anymore. They must decide if they are business people or politicians. We are calling on business people to stop meddling in the politics of ZANU-PF. If they do not do that, we will deal with them."

Cde Mutsvangwa added: "We want business that focuses on production and production. Our President has been generous with reconciliation.

"They must cut their umbilical cord with Kaukonde and so on . . . those who trouble us are those people who could not make sacrifice when time was required to do so."

It was also resolved that war veterans should be given positions in the Politburo and in Government, with Cde Mutsvangwa saying some people with neither liberation war history nor commitment found their way into decision-making positions.

He singled out Minister of State in the President's Office Cde Flora Buka and accused elements pushing for regime change of facilitating the appointment of such people into positions of authority.

"We want undivided power for the President of the party," said Cde Mutsvangwa. "Only the President must appoint. It must be reflected in the constitution, and not people he appoints to come and challenge him. Tavakuda kuti President vatonge nemiswo — people who remain faithful to the revolution."

Also in their resolutions, the war veterans endorsed President Mugabe as the ZANU-PF candidate for the 2018 elections and threw their weight behind First



**Chief Chivese**

Early Anna Grace Mugabe as ZANU-PF Women's League secretary.

The war veterans called on Europe and the us to remove the illegal sanctions they imposed on President Mugabe and the First Family if they were serious about re-engagement with Zimbabwe.

"If Europe is serious that it wants to engage with Zimbabwe, they must stop stigmatising our President. They must stop stigmatising our First Lady," Cde Mutsvangwa said.

The war veterans said Zimbabwe already enjoyed mutually beneficial relations with economic power houses like China and the ball was in Europe's court.

"Europe and America must consider the offer from President Mugabe. He said I want to work well with everybody. Reciprocate and let us be friends . . . the offer is on the table, Europe and America take note," said Cde Mutsvangwa.

The welfare of war veterans was also extensively debated and it was resolved



**Cde Ester Munyaradzi**

that their needs be attended to as a matter of urgency.

The war veterans also resolved to work with traditional leaders.

The new ZNLWA national executive members are Cde Mutsvangwa (chairperson), deputy chairperson Cde Headman Moyo (Matabeleland North), secretary-general Cde Victor Matemadanda (Midlands), treasurer-general Cde Robert Ncube (Bulawayo), political commissar Cde Francis Nando (Masvingo) and secretary for security Cde Malaki Mpofo (Matabeleland South).

Cde Mandi Chimene (Manicaland) was elected secretary for information and publicity, secretary for transport and welfare Charles Mpofo (Harare), secretary for legal affairs Chief Chivese (Mashonaland East) and secretary for women affairs Cde Esther Munyaradzi.

The elections were presided over by Major-General Engelbert Rugeje and conducted through a secret ballot supervised by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission.

**Figure 1 Step down, War vets tell Mujuru**

## 4.1.1 Words and symbols

In the story above, war veterans urge Vice President Joice Mujuru to consider resigning due to the fact that she is facing allegations of trying to topple President Mugabe through the activities of her allies Rugare Gumbo, Didymus Mutasa and Nicholas Goche. Mujuru is described as the enemy of the revolution in that President Mugabe is a lone soldier surrounded by "counter revolutionaries, who sponsor rebellion in the country and bribing politicians". The phrase

above implies that Mujuru is a devious deputy to the president who wants to derail or destroy the ideals of the revolution which ZANU PF symbolises. She is portrayed as someone who is corrupt and sponsoring rebellion. As such the message is that the President is better off without an unfaithful deputy and Mujuru should be ejected or is unfit to be in the position of a vice president.

The use of particular words in news stories affects how meaning is created (Kress and Leewen 1996). It therefore follows that how something is said affects how people understand it. The selection of certain words communicates certain issues and can lend readers to have a differential understanding of the issue. Words used in stories are key in the construction of frames because they are critical in the making of a frame since a frame specifies the relationship between several connected elements in a text. Words are critical because a message contains two elements which provide, firstly the specific content and, secondly, how the message should be interpreted (Bateson 1972).

In the story *Step down, war vets tell Mujuru*, Mujuru is depicted as a power-hungry person who wants to take over as she is said to have said that President Mugabe would be “90 and God might call him.” The putschists frame is also brought in the other story on the same page ...*Mutasa also, say analysts* where it urges for Mutasa to be fired from both the party and government because as the minister responsible for Presidential Affairs his moral blameworthiness is very high because he exercises oversight on State Security. Mutasa is alleged to have hatched a plot to assassinate President Mugabe and this is allegedly revealed by one of his lovers; “if President Mugabe blocks the ascendancy of Vice President to the Presidency at the ZANU PF Congress then he will be shot”.

Mutasa is also alleged to have said to be ready to show Mugabe that he did not have support, failure of which he will be forcibly taken out; “this time we (the Mujuru faction) are ready to show Mugabe at Congress that he has no support. So if he refuses to listen to us, we will take him out”. Another Mujuru ally, Rugare Gumbo, is also alleged to have been recorded making the assassination threats by saying “kana (President) Mugabe akaramba achipusha Mujuru out tichamubvisa sezvakaitwa (Laurent) Kabila” (If President Mugabe continues to push Mujuru out, we will remove him Kabila style). DRC’s President Laurent Kabila was killed by a member of his security team in January 2001. The story also links another Mujuru ally, Nicholas Goche, who is alleged to have made “contingencies for such a scenario (of assassinating President Mugabe) during recent meetings with potential hit-men in South Africa and Israel”.

The connection of the putschists plot is made by the use of a South African based political scientist Hamilton Ruwodo who said that “there is a very clear connection between the treasonous statements made by Didymus Mutasa and Rugare Gumbo. By saying that they were planning to take out the president by shooting him, Mutasa was indicating what the Mujuru faction was planning to do to oust the President”. The net effect of the use of the statements from people described as Vice President Mujuru’s allies who are all saying that the President must pave way for her or he will be eliminated is meant to show that indeed she was planning to take over power and thus is a leader of a putschist cabal.

#### **4.1.2 Preferred meanings**

The intention of the two front page stories entitled *Step down, war vets tell Mujuru and ...Mutasa also, say analysts 17/11/14* was to depict Mujuru as a leader of a group of people who wanted to topple the President so that she can take over as the leader of the party and government.

By linking Mujuru with people such as Rugare Gumbo, who had been suspended for making treasonous statements, and Mutasa who oversees the State Security apparatus and presidential affairs also plotting to assassinate President Mugabe, is meant to make readers see the gravity of the plot. The linking of plans by Nicholas Goche to hire hit-men from South Africa and Israel with the utterances by Gumbo and Mutasa also makes it clear that if these are close allies of Mujuru then she is guilty as charged and thus should be fired.

As President Mugabe is the symbol of the party and country, anyone who fights him naturally becomes an enemy of the party. This is meant to mobilise hatred for Mujuru and prepare for her dismissal and the calls by the war veterans, who are considered to be a respectable voice in national affairs, is significant. Through the selective use of analysts who buttress the seriousness of the assassination plots, *The Herald* seeks to portray Mujuru as guilty in the eyes of ZANU PF supporters and its readers.

A news or any kind of a newspaper story contains a certain preferred meaning or reading consciously encoded by the media institution on how the story should be interpreted. The import of the preferred meaning is made through the use of framing devices such as word choices, metaphors, exemplars, descriptions, arguments and visual images to deal with justifications, causes and consequences (Goffman 1974).

### 4.1.3 Omission analysis

The two stories *Step down, war vets tell Mujuru* and *...Mutasa also, say analysts 17/11/14* made serious omissions in that they never really made an attempt to reveal the reasons for the plots to assassinate the President or to question the authenticity of the allegations or the reason why in light of the seriousness of the charges, especially with respect to treason as no arrests were made. The stories also omitted to tell readers whether all these allegations could have been due to lack of a clear succession plan which could naturally lead to deputies also looking at the possibilities of taking over.

Another aspect that *The Herald* omitted was that there is nothing criminal in any member of a political party seeking higher political office and in this case *The Herald* was guilty of not reading into the internal democracy within the party. Furthermore, *The Herald* sought to dwell more on the activities of the Mujuru faction without discussing the other factions which are believed to be led by Emerson Mnangagwa and the G40 faction. The opinions expressed in the story *Step down, war vets tell Mujuru 17/11/14* are based on the views of the leadership led by Christopher Mutsvangwa whose animosity against Mujuru is on public record.

Another aspect omitted by the story is that the views of the war veterans under the Mutsvangwa-led Zimbabwe National War Veterans Association ( ZNWVA) are portrayed as representing all war veterans is debatable. Not all war veterans are in the association and agree with the notion of one centre of power. The framing also ignores the fact that Mujuru is a war veteran whose views should also be taken aboard. Also by showing the readers the allies of Mujuru, *The Herald* did not reveal the allies for the other faction and did not try to give a clear reason for trying to separate Mujuru from party and government colleagues since these people reported to her as their superior. In fact every member of the party was expected to be close to Mujuru as their leader and trying to criminalise the relationship and classifying others as close to her shows lack of critical analysis and deliberate omission for sinister motives.

In any frame certain information may be deliberately excluded or omitted when certain frames are emphasised in order to arrive at certain meanings. The potential effects of frames are also determined not only by what they include but also by what they exclude (Entman 1993). Such omissions are in sync with the concept of framing since a frame is a central organising idea that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration (Tankard, Hendrickson, Silverman, Bliss and Ghanem 1991).

#### 4.1.4 Limiting debate

*The Herald's* framing of Mujuru in the story *Step down, war vets tell Mujuru and ...Mutasa also, say analysts 17/11/14* is also fraught with practices that are incompatible with expectations of quality broadsheet journalism and which does not enhance the role of the media as a public sphere of rational debate on political issues. The two stories gravitate towards tabloid reporting styles as they are based on fictitious sources which are only identified "as investigations also show that another senior VP Mujuru ally, a cabinet minister from Mashonaland, made contingencies for such a scenario (Mugabe will be shot at Congress) during recent meetings with potential hit-men in South Africa and Israel".

The reports linking Mujuru's allies to plots of trying to assassinate the president are also based on hearsay and rumours which is blown out of proportion through the use of sources described as either being heard saying so or "lovers". This kind of reporting shows that the stories are just mere fabrications and fiction which insults the intelligence of readers in typical tabloid style. Such stories leave readers uninformed about the real issues. Furthermore, such stories with sensational allegations that there were plots to hire hit-men presuppose that the whole government machinery could be manipulated by a few individuals. This does not create an enlightened citizenry and thus becomes a means of mass deception through escapist fantasies instead of concentrating on critical issues that affect the country. All this is an indicator towards tabloidisation as noted by Franklin (1997). These tabloidisation tendencies also greatly damage the public sphere as noted by McNair (2001) as they lead to the transformation of the journalistic culture from a source of mass enlightenment to cause mass pacification and intellectual degeneration.

Ideally the media should be a public sphere for rational debate (Dahlgren 1995) where all sides of an issue are presented so that meaningful debate on an issue can take place. How a news story is framed can limit debate through the presence or absence of certain key words, stock phrases, sources of information and sentences that provide theoretically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgements (Entman 1993).

In the story “*Bhasikiti misses MDC-T*” 19/11/14) another Mujuru ally, Kudakwashe Bhasikiti is reported to be missing the MDC-T which he was working with in the inclusive government. The MDC is considered to be a counter-revolutionary party that fronts interests of Western countries and as such any association with it by ZANU PF members is anathema. The import of the story on Bhasikiti is that Mujuru is associating with members who are dining with the enemy, the MDC-T, and thus making it probable to confirm the allegations that Mujuru was intent on ousting President Mugabe. The claims that Bhasikiti hankered for the inclusive government are backed by a quote which is used out of context, where Bhasikiti was questioning why ZANU PF could not work well on its own in the inclusive government. This is interpreted as missing the MDC-T. Bhasikiti was quoted saying;

We won the elections and we are one party but the fights that we now witness are far worse than those we saw when we were in government with Tsvangirai... If we were united with Tsvangirai yesterday and could not find problems with it towards the development of our nation, why can't we do the same today as a party so that we can flow together as a nation?... if self-interests and disunity continue to impede we will fail to mend what has been lost by the family “*Bhasikiti misses MDC-T*” (19/11/14).

The above remarks are said to “dovetail” with other reports that Bhasikiti was part of the clique aligned to VP Mujuru that was opposed to the holding of the harmonised elections. In another story an ally of Mujuru, Didymus Mutasa is also described in disparaging terms as a double-faced traitor who profusely professes allegiance to President Mugabe but is a disloyal pretender who is involved in plans to eliminate him and put Mujuru in his place. *Mutasa's double face exposed* (21/11/ 14). The elimination would be achieved through;

... manipulation of the party's structures through vote rigging and buying to ensure control of the Electoral College so as to be able to boo President Mugabe and oust him through a vote of no confidence from the floor. (21/11/ 14).

These claims are also based on reports that a nephew of Mutasa was heard telling a colleague that Mugabe will be eliminated at Congress. To bolster the double-faced character of Mutasa, the article also notes that “history is replete with the pattern where the most trusted lieutenants become the most dangerous against their principals” (21/11/ 14).

The move by Mujuru to write a letter expressing interests in the post of VP after sensing that she will be dislodged is also used as an example to show that she has legendary ineptitude through defying a politburo decision that President Mugabe will nominate the VPs. This is also

interpreted as a self-expulsion move and lack of respect for the leadership which is characteristic of faction leader, rebel and economic saboteur.

VP Mujuru has become the single biggest hindrance to the implementation of the government's policies through her corrupt activities... her continuous rebellion is a measure of how deep her rebellion was. She must stop the nonsense of holding all party cadres who were in her support under the illusion that she had an autonomous parallel centre of power. *"VP Mujuru has expelled herself" (22/11/14).*

From the above quote, Mujuru is framed negatively through the use of words such as "corrupt", "rebellion" and creating "an autonomous centre of power". Such activities are characteristic of a disloyal individual who should be rejected by the party. Furthermore, the rejection of the nomination of Mujuru and Goche from the ZANU PF Central Committee by their host province of Mashonaland Central is also presented as the price for leading a putschist cabal to kill President Mugabe; *"Mash Central says no to VP Mujuru Central Committee applications rejected, Nicholas Goche opts out" (11/11/14).* The withdrawal by Goche of his nomination papers after ZANU PF youths blocked and demonstrated against him is also presented as evidence that indeed he planned to assassinate President Mugabe despite his denial of the allegations. The story is linked to utterances by Rugare Gumbo that Mugabe will be shot if he blocks Mujuru's ascendancy in which Goche recruited hit-men in South Africa and Israel for the assassination. Also, Goche is alleged to have said "guns will be fired and unnamed people will be flushed down the toilet". These unnamed people are presumed to include President Mugabe.

In the same story, *"Mash Central says no to VP Mujuru Central Committee applications rejected, Nicholas Goche opts out" (11/11/14)*, Goche is accused of masterminding evil schemes as President Mugabe is quoted contemptuously quizzing him over the evil schemes; *"Ko ndiwe urikunangwa huroyi"* (You are the one accused of witchcraft) and "ribbed" with the derogatory song *"Ndiwe muroyi ndiwe"* (You are the witch), which according to the story prompted the "visibly shaken minister to spring into self-defence".

Goché was also prevented from presenting his curriculum vitae for the Central Committee by ZANU PF supporters holding placards denouncing him and Mujuru. Some of the placards read *"Goche and Mujuru ngavasungwe"* (Goche and Mujuru must be arrested), *"Pasi neCV yegamatox"* (Down with CV's from the Mujuru faction), *"Zimbuya reDotito Zimuroyi"* (The Grandmother from Dotito is a witch – referring to Mujuru), *"Pasi navanoda kuuraya President"* (Down with those who want to kill the President), and *"Imbwa dzese hamuende ku*

*Central Committee*” (All dogs should not be nominated for Central Committee). This amounted to a demonisation exercise and *The Herald* sought to agree with this depiction of Mujuru which also confirms that there were bigger forces which dictated such framing.

*The Herald* also made extensive use of the letters to the editor to frame Mujuru as guilty and therefore needed to apologise for all the allegations levelled against her. “It’s *time for VP Mujuru to apologise to the nation*” (4/12/14), one letter said. According to the letter, failing the party is equated to failing the nation. Mujuru is ordered to apologise because she has been corrupted and turned from a liberator into an oppressor. The alleged corrupt deals and plots to oust President Mugabe by Mujuru are described as stinking “high to heaven and unpardonable”. She is also accused of being cruel and selfish through sacrificing the people that she liberated and abusing her office to serve personal interests at the expense of public good. The letter brings out this aspect succinctly, thus:

We respected, supported you and loved you as a mother but you betrayed our trust. You robbed us of the little we had in terms of wealth as a nation through your corrupt activities. As if that was not enough, Dr Mujuru you repaid the nation’s trust by plotting President Mugabe’s demise. Your love for money brought confusion to our party and it is wise you take leave. You deserve no sympathy at all for too long you have been abusing power and authority. “It’s *time for VP Mujuru to apologise to the nation*” (4/12/14)

The letter makes reference to the case when Mujuru was Minister of Communication where she is accused of trying to scuttle a bid by a mobile communication company, Econet Wireless, to obtain an operating licence through “unscrupulous and unconstitutional” means. In addition, Mujuru is accused of looting national resources for her family’s benefit under the pretext of reeling under the effects of economic sanctions while “reaping big time”.

According to the story entitled “*President on assassination, Mujuru engaged MDC-T, N’angas.*” 04/12/14, *The Herald* alleges that in trying to oust President Mugabe and grab power, Mujuru consulted witchdoctors and local church leaders such as the Johane Marange Apostolic Sect in Manicaland to seek magical or divine powers to become the next leader of the country. The accusation of seeking divine powers is described as a desperate desire to grab power by Mujuru and is labelled as unprecedented and even unheard of during the liberation struggle. Surprisingly Mujuru did not respond to these insults. In another story “*President hailed for Expulsion and VP Mujuru, 8 ministers fired*” (10/12/14), the firing of Mujuru and her allies is described as an appropriate move because people who were accused of such crimes



were expending their energy on factional politics, corruption, abuse of office, and undermining the authority of the president including hatching plots to kill him.

The framing of Mujuru and her allies as enemies of the state by *The Herald* seems to have aided the decision to fire Mujuru and her allies from the government as confirmed by one fired minister, Munacho Mutezo, who partly blamed the publication for their downfall. “*Mandipedza hazvina mhosva*” (You have contributed to my downfall, anyway that is what you wanted), he is quoted as saying. The sacking of Mujuru is justified as good riddance of a person who is “corrupt, sowing divisions, colluding with the enemies and attempting to remove the president from power” (3/4/12) and lacks leadership qualities, moral principles, honesty and decency to be a ZANU PF member.

Other reasons which warranted Mujuru’s expulsion according to *The Herald* story “*Zanu PF Expels Joice Mujuru, Slew of allegations cited, Plots traced as far back as 2004*” (03/4/15) include the fact that she is responsible for the ZANU PF loss in the 2008 elections through the *Bhora Musango* project which saw Dumiso Dabengwa and Simba Makoni forming Mavambo Kusile Dawn (MKD). She was also accused of usurping President Mugabe’s powers, instigating ministers to disobey the president and holding clandestine meetings with Western diplomats such as US Charles Ray, conspiring with MDC-T in the constitution making process which resulted in the insertion of “sell-out” clauses in the document and delays in the holding the harmonised elections.

In all this, *The Herald* portrays Mujuru as someone advancing “putschist” activities through high level corruption, the proceeds of which were used to distort outcomes of youths and women’s congresses. In the public view, according to *The Herald*, she is the godmother of all the corruption “including that which has brought strategic parastatals like Air Zimbabwe, ZBC, NRZ, GMB to its knees” (3/4/15). Such framing is unhelpful in that it seems to lay the blame on an individual for the rot in the economy and in so doing *The Herald* fails to be a forum for rigorous debate at the expense of setting an agenda for factional politics.

*The Herald* also made use of revelations by Mutasa and Gumbo that they wanted to form a political party; “*Mujuru putschists vindicate expulsion*” (7/14/15), as evidence to vindicate the decision to expel Mujuru, a greedy individual and extortionist who holds 10% in many companies describing her as “Dr 10%”.

By revealing plans to form a party called Zimbabwe People First (ZPF) Mujuru is ridiculed and described as a greedy person who pushes her interest first ahead of the party, instead of putting “people first she is greedy and puts “funds first”. In the putschist cabal frame *The Herald* sought to portray Mujuru as a power-hungry person who can do anything including consulting traditional witchdoctors, assassins and corruption for the sake of usurping power in both the party and government. She therefore is a bad apple that deserves to be expelled from the party and government. The other frames by the newspaper amplify and build on this frame.

## **4.2 Traitor/economic saboteur frame**

In the traitor/economic saboteur frame as depicted in *The Herald*, Mujuru is a traitor who tries to betray her benefactor and leader President Mugabe by working with elements that seek to assassinate him and destroy the party from within. She thus becomes an enemy. She is depicted as going against the ideals of the ZANU PF party and empowerment policies such as the land reform and indigenous and economic empowerment.

The traitor frame is also made more clearer by the an analysis of the story *Congress is judgement day for VP Mujuru – MP 3/12/2014*



# Congress is judgment day for VP Mujuru — MP

Herald Reporter

THE ZANU-PF 6th National People's Congress will be the "Judgment Day" for Vice President Joice Mujuru together with her allies accused of plotting to oust President Mugabe unconstitutionally.

Addressing Women's Affairs members showcasing their handicraft in Gokwe on Monday, Gokwe-Nembudziya National Assembly member Justice Mayor Wadyajena called for VP Mujuru's resignation at congress.

The congress started yesterday in Harare.

Cde Wadyajena said congress would witness the "Judas" VP Mujuru's political career coming to an end.

He implored Women's Affairs members in his constituency to desist from copying the deplorable traits of VP Mujuru, which he said had destroyed the revolutionary party and economy.

"We are holding our congress this week and vow that President Mugabe and Dr Grace Mugabe are the only candidates.

"The President is going to pick and appoint his deputies who are loyal to him and the party. The day of anguish for a Dotito Judas, Amai Mujuru has come.

"In Dotito there is a Judas called Mujuru who wants to assassinate the President but we realised her demonic schemes before she could strike. We are going to kill her politically by removing her from that post (VP)."

The party's 6th National Congress kicked off yesterday and will end on Sunday. Cde Wadyajena reiterated the sentiments by Harare Provincial chairman Cde Godwin Gomwe of blocking the VP if she made an effort to appear



**Gokwe-Nembudziya legislator Justice Mayor Wadyajena (left) hands over a sewing machine to Cde Pepetua Mukwananzi who came tops in a sewing competition during a women's constituency show in Nembudziya on Monday**

at the congress venue.

"We will block her entrance to the congress venue. Blood will be spilled," he said.

He said VP Mujuru had shamed the party by her involvement in corrupt activities which affected the party's Zim-Asset agenda.

"VP Mujuru is a wolf in sheep skins. She held secret meetings with the Americans thereby reversing the gains

of independence. Our Zim-Asset manifesto said we should create two million jobs should be crested from the blueprint but how can we empower our country if the VP is corrupt."

Cde Wadyajena implored all legislators to support the Presidential Agricultural Input Scheme by donating seed maize during the rainy season.

"The President and Amai Mugabe gave us free inputs. All those who are

calling for bribes labelled as "joining fees" should be ousted from our progressive constituency," he said.

"Time is moving. We have a commitment to make to the electorate who voted for us to represent them in Parliament.

With the onset of the rainy season we should mobilise resources such as farming inputs to boost our food production," he said.

**Figure 2**

### **4.2.1 Words and symbols**

In the story *Congress is judgement day for VP Mujuru – MP 3/12/2014*, Mujuru is reported to be set to face judgement as she is a “Dotito Judas” whose political career should come to the end at the Congress because she has betrayed the party by trying to oust President Mugabe. Mujuru has what are described as “deplorable traits” which have “destroyed the revolutionary party and the economy”. As such Congress will be that day that she will face anguish for trying to kill the president because “In Dotito there is a Judas called Mujuru who wants to assassinate the President but we have realised her demonic schemes before she could strike. We are potentially going to kill her politically by removing her from that post (VP)”. She is also described in the story as a shame to the party because of her corrupt activities and a “wolf in sheep skins” who held secret meetings with foreigners to reverse empowerment programmes. What emerges from the words such as “Judas, demonic, wolf in sheep skins and corrupt” is that Mujuru has dealt treacherously and should be ejected and rejected by all in ZANU PF and even in the country as she has deplorable traits.

### **4.2.2 Preferred meanings**

The story *Congress is judgement day for VP Mujuru – MP 3/12/2014* seeks to justify that Mujuru deserves to be punished for the alleged misdeeds and that she deserves no clemency as she has become public enemy. She is supposed to be an object of scorn by all party members, a traitor like the Biblical Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus Christ through the love for money or 30 pieces of silver when Jesus thought that Judas was a faithful disciple. Judas Iscariot is the greatest of the commonly known betrayers and as such what happened to Judas Iscariot is the same treatment that Mujuru should get for the love of money.

The traitorous aspects of Mujuru are brought to the fore in three ways; trying to kill the president, and involvement in corrupt activities, holding secret meetings with Americans in a bid to reverse the gains of independence and empowerment programmes. As such she should be rejected by all Zimbabweans. Such depictions then give power to youths to block her from the Congress as she will endanger the security of the President who should be protected from her and her cabal.

### 4.2.3 Omission analysis

*The Herald* framing in the story “*Congress is judgement day for VP Mujuru – MP*” 3/12/2014, shows inconsistencies in that while the story tried to portray what is described as the deplorable aspects of Mujuru who will face judgement at Congress, the same story seems to have the judgement passed as youths are reported to be ready to block her from attending the gathering. Another omission is that it is also not possible to attribute the destruction of the ZANU PF party (which is still functional and won a landslide victory in July 2013 elections) and economy to activities of any single individual. Such omissions point to a tabloid style associated with the lowering of journalism standards which threatens democracy by ignoring the real political issues in favour of superficial political scandal, a point also noted by Örnebring and Jonsson 2008).

Also *The Herald* insults the intelligence of its readers by making such simplistic claims that with Mujuru out of ZANU PF and government then ZANU PF party will be united and that the economy will rebound. What *The Herald* omits is that the chief source of the story Justice Mayor Wadyajena was just making a bidding for a rival faction allegedly led by Emmerson Mnangagwa and as such his statements should have not been taken seriously and allowed to make defamatory statements that Mujuru had “demonic schemes” and un-substantiated corruption allegations.

Also in terms of corruption, it is not possible to single out Mujuru as the only corrupt person in ZANU PF due to the existence of various reports of corruption in both the party and the country. Furthermore, the fact that the country has an Anti-Corruption Commission is an indicator that corruption is a widespread issue that is engulfing the whole nation and which needs concerted efforts rather than attributing it to an individual. In terms of holding meetings with Americans, there were several high-ranking party and government individuals who were implicated in the WikiLeaks reports on the issue. However *The Herald* selectively applied it on those who are at odds with it like Mujuru to frame her as an enemy and traitor of the party and country.

### 4.2.4 Limiting debate

This story “*Congress is judgement day for VP Mujuru – MP*” 3/12/2014, shows that *The Herald* is content with printing sensational and personal opinions to sale copy and frame a perceived enemy without any regard for impartiality expected of a quality newspaper. Such a



practice is unhelpful in terms of citizens being able to make rational decisions as it merely narrates what Wadyajena was saying about his political rival without offering alternative views. The sensational claims of Mujuru being corrupt to the extent of affecting the economic blueprint Zim-Asset were just regurgitated by the paper without any critical analysis. Wadyajena's personal views are treated as authentic comments without seeking balance by talking to the person affected by such a story. Such conduct therefore makes *The Herald* to appear to be a public relations conduit for factional political leaders depending on who is in control of the paper at a given time. The uncritical approach means that the newspaper should not be taken seriously.

The traitor frame is initiated by the First Lady, Grace Mugabe, and *The Herald* extensively magnifies it to the extent of even using editorials. Grace Mugabe credits herself for the rise of Mujuru in 2004 to become the first female vice president but accuses Mujuru of becoming a traitor by turning and working against her and spreading malicious rumours about the First Family. Due to this traitorous behaviour, Mujuru must thus resign from the post of Vice President of Zimbabwe or risk a humiliating exit; "*First Lady repeats call for Mujuru resignation 18/11/14*". By being traitorous to the president, Mujuru naturally becomes a traitor to the whole country. Such connections seem to construct a view that the president is the sole definer of national interests and any opposition to him makes one a traitor.

To expand on this frame, Grace Mugabe claims to have evidence of then VP Mujuru demeaning President Mugabe saying; "*HanzimukadziwaMugabe anongoswera kukwekweredzana nacho chimudharachiyaachichimanikidza kuti handeinekukaramari....the writing is on the wall clearly in bold print saying hatichakudaiamai*" (Mugabe's wife spends her time dragging the old man forcing him to continue leading the country because of greediness for money... the writing is on the wall in bold print that we no longer want you mother (Joice Mujuru)).

On top of the calls to resign, Grace Mugabe also accused Mujuru of incompetence and corruption;

Don't force us to fire you, you showed us that you are not capable to lead full stop, we need people who work. The president wants lieutenants who help him develop this nation. Crooks and thieves are not tolerated.

As the First Lady made calls for Mujuru to resign for being a traitor, another opinion article on the same day echoed the traitorous nature of Mujuru; "*ZANU PF: When enemy within is revealed 18/11/14*". In this article Mujuru is constructed as a traitor and an enemy working

within ZANU PF to destroy the party by working with elements that wanted to kill the president, such as Rugare Gumbo; “..... a number of persons linked to VP Mujuru especially Rugare Gumbo have been fingered in a elimination plot has been all over the media accusing his factional opponents of trying to destroy the revolutionary party from within.”

A letter to the editor also brings to the fore the treacherous nature of Mujuru; “4/12/14 *Vice President bit the hand that feed her*”. The letter attributes the lack of response from Mujuru on the various allegations as foolishness and arrogance on her part; “The fact that she remains quiet is a sign that she is arrogant and focused on achieving her bad intentions against the president,” the letter reads.

In addition, she is described as a hardcore, callous, and unrepentant person unashamed of her miscalculated actions against the head of state who promoted her into the presidium. Another letter which amplifies the traitorous allegations links Mujuru to Satanism - “5/12/14 *Mujuru betrayed the nation*”. As a traitor, Mujuru is described as a person with no shame and one engaged in shameful acts of ‘Satanism’ by trying to kill for power. She thus deserves heavy punishment because she is “the architect of chaos that is in the country and the party - betraying the benefactor for a few pieces of silver and thereby selling her heart to the ‘devil’”. The letter suggests that Mujuru’s removal from the party would transform Zimbabwe for the better; “Now that you are gone, I am beginning to see the future of ZANU PF and our nation. It shines bright.”

#### **4.2.5 Use of editorials in the traitor frame**

The framing of Joice Mujuru as a traitor made extensive uses of editorials which by their nature revealed the official position of the newspaper on the issue. Editorials, unlike news stories, contribute an important aspect of a newspaper or content because they provide an opportunity for the newspaper to influence public opinion (Hulteng 1973). It therefore follows that editorials are important in terms of framing as they offer an official view of the newspaper on a particular issue and mould a particular opinion (Kriegbaum 1956). Furthermore, editorials are carefully structured with an introduction, body and conclusion to allow a newspaper to either endorse an issue or convince readers on a course of action, criticise a position, praise and also allow the newspaper to argue and resent its views without inserting opinion in news stories or colouring news articles (Davies 1987, Harris and Johnson 1965). The following editorials will be analysed in the context of the framing of Joice Mujuru as a traitor by *The Herald*.

Two editorials - “*Mujuru blown away by own bomb* (10/12/14) and *Lessons from Mnangagwa, Mujuru* (11/12/14”) - epitomise the traitor framing of Mujuru.



**Figure 3 Editorial: Mujuru blown way by own bomb**

In the editorial above, Mujuru is compared to Okonkwo, a character in Chinua Achebe’s novel *Things Fall Apart*, who provokes fate without knowing the limits of the pursuit of power. Mujuru is thus framed as big-headed to the extent of believing she could challenge the equivalent of her ‘Chi’ with disastrous consequences. In the Ibo tradition, ‘Chi’ is the guardian spirit given to every individual at birth and is responsible for one’s fortunes and or misfortunes depending on their behaviour.

In this frame, Mujuru made history in being the first VP to be fired in independent Zimbabwe for incompetence and behaviour inconsistent with such an office. All her fore-runners had died whilst still serving in the office. The editorial clearly outlines the fall of Mujuru;

But before tempting fate Joice Mujuru story was an inspiration to every girl child who defied the odds to join the liberation struggle at the age of 18 before scoring a first by becoming the youngest cabinet minister at the age of 25 until 2004 Congress making history by becoming the first female vice president in front of Mnangagwa who she had played second fiddle to as secretary for Administration. The President had faith in her and urged her not to consider the VP as her ceiling.



But due to her simplistic mind, Mujuru turned the words literally and started scheming against her benefactor. (10/12/14)

The editorial then chronicles the traitorous charges against her ranging from the 2006 Mashonaland East abortive revolt against President Mugabe at the National People's Congress (NPC) at Goromonzi High School and the alleged 2007 Mujuru-inspired revisionist project in the biography of the late national hero, Edgar Tekere, where President Mugabe was maligned as a prelude to the formation and launch of Mavambo project by former ZANU PF members Simba Makoni and Dumiso Dabengwa.

The other traitorous charges laid in the editorial include funding factional activities through destroying parastatals and state enterprises and frustrating the implementation of all efforts at economic revival.

In the editorial "*Lessons from Mnangagwa, Mujuru*" 11/12/14), a comparison is made of Mujuru and Mnangagwa using the traitor/impatient frames for Mujuru and patient and loyal frames for Mnangagwa. The editorial frames Mnangagwa as deserving to be VP in 2004 ahead of Mujuru who was the Secretary for Women, a lower rank than Mnangagwa who was Secretary for Administration and a member of the ZANU PF presidium. Mnangagwa is portrayed as willing to be humiliated and given a less influential post of Minister of Rural and Social Amenities and demotion from Secretary of Administration to Secretary for Legal Affairs.

In a surprise move, the editorial dismisses the 2004 Tsholotsho declaration which led to the fall of Mnangagwa. He is portrayed as loyal although bitter of losing to Mujuru who benefitted at his expense but started scheming against her benefactor. The patient Mnangagwa thus deserves respect and honour because Mujuru is;

. . . without honour even in her own district of Mt Darwin finding succour on the page of hostile tabloids that even find political nonentities like the MDC-T leader politically sexy. (11/12/14)

The editorial refers to Mnangagwa as Cde and Mujuru as the fallen Vice President Dr Joice Teurai Ropa Mujuru. The effect of "Teurai Ropa" (Spill Blood) is to emphasise the negative and traitorous nature of the person. Another aspect of the traitor framing of Mujuru comes out of the criticism of her newly formed Zimbabwe People First party's economic policy document – Blueprint to Unlock Investment and Leverage for Development (BUILD) – which is described as an anti-people right wing document meant to reverse the gains of the land reform

and indigenisation policies. Such a document is described as one that can only come from traitors and enemies who front foreign interests –“*Mujuru headed for sunset, MDC-T, analysts slate manifesto*” (10/09/15).

*The Herald* urges the rejection of the Mujuru manifesto because its author is a ZANU PF rebel and reject who is doomed, headed for the sunset and incapable of coming with her own ideas. The manifesto is rejected because it is just a “copy and paste” anti- Zimbabwean, anti-indigenisation, Rhodesian manifesto calculated to reverse historic gains on land and indigenisation. As such the manifesto is coming from an incapable traitor who has copied from other known traitors such as the MDC-T because it is just “Patchwork of ideas derived from the opposition MDC-T led by Morgan Tsvangirai and Simba Makoni’s Mavambo/Kusile /Dawn manifestos”.

*The Herald* makes extensive use of analysts such as Charity Manyeruke to dismiss the BUILD document as alien to Zimbabwe;

It is not a Zimbabwean blueprint. It has been authored for non-Zimbabweans because it places emphasis on international best practices. Best practices for any country are its national interests and indigenous systems. “*Mujuru headed for sunset, MDC-T, analysts slate manifesto*” (10/09/15).

Another extensively used analyst, Goodwine Mureriwa, argued that the BUILD manifesto vindicated ZANU PF’s decision to fire Mujuruher together with her cabal as she has displayed her true colours by prioritising western demands.

As a politician, Mujuru is predicted to fail because Zimbabweans are fully aware of what she stands for – an incompetent person, traitor, and enemy and sell out who has brought an “anti-ZANU PF manifesto” (*Mujuru poses more threat to MDC-T than Zanu PF* (10/09/15). According to the article, by becoming an opposition Mujuru and her allies automatically assume the shape of an enemy and sell-out, “a label which makes them politically finished”. Examples of former ZANU PF members who failed politically after a fallout with ZANU PF such as Edgar Tekere (Zimbabwe Unity Movement) Dumiso Dabengwa and Margaret Dongo are provided to illustrate this point. Thus Mujuru will be a spent force outside ZANU PF even if she joins with other political parties in the opposition because ZANU PF remains an invincible party.

The manifesto by Mujuru is described as anti-empowerment and negates the ideals of the liberation struggle, especially by seeking to review the land reform and give land to “anyone

who calls Zimbabwe home”(*Mujuru in attempt to reverse empowerment (11/09/15)*).Mujuru is thus no “longer a revolutionary par excellence who used to be respected by all Zimbabweans”.

*The Herald* portrays Mujuru as a self-contradicting, unstable and unprincipled person who fights everything that she once supported.The effect of the framing is to demonstrate that Mujuru has always opposed ZANU PF empowerment policies even when she was in the party and that she is being manipulated by the West because of her liberation credentials.

Her lack of principles and greedy is also brought to the fore in her claim that she had 98% disability during the War Victims Compensation exercise where she is alleged to have looted the War Victims Compensation Fund using her powerful position in government and party. This is meant to show that she is not good enough to be a leader of a party let alone a country by claiming 98% disability when she was as fit as a fiddle.

The consequences are dire for Mujuru because if she managed to coerce vetting authorities to give her 98% disability, it could be worse when she becomes the first citizen. Her BUILD manifesto is portrayed as only clamouring for international recognition with her manifesto being welcomed with cheers and ululation by known sell-outs.

The editorial “*Joice Mujuru shows her true colours*” (11/09/15) succinctly describes Mujuru as a counter-revolutionary and strips her of any claims to the liberation war narrative. By apologising for her role in ZANU PF’s failure to govern since 1980 and by launching the BUILD manifesto she is thus;

Solidi(fying) her treachery and rebuttal of ideals of the liberation struggle. Chiefly seeking to reverse the land reform and indigenisation programmes which are the hallmarks of the latter and final stages of this country quest for self-determination.

The sudden change by Mujuru is described as shocking by a hypocrite who seeks to disown a process that made her what she is in the past 35 years. In trying to apologise for her role in ZANU PF’s failure over the past 35 years, Mujuru has all but given up any claims to the liberation struggle.

Mujuru has all but given away her heritage and credentials. What this means is that Joice is a lost, wondering soul. She cannot claim any stake in the liberation narrative because she disowned it and called it a hoax and a mistake equally. She cannot pretend to be a poster girl for the ordinary poor Zimbabwean because she has shown not to be one of them, everybody knows her mean acquisitive and generally corrupt nature of which she has made her family one of the richest in the country.

In this frame, Mujuru is depicted as a traitor who will not succeed. She will fall like the others who left ZANU PF because she will never claim the liberation credentials which has been a favourable attribute while at the same time one cannot purport to be a champion of “neo-liberal ideals that the Western sponsored opposition is identified with”. The effect of this frame is thus to prepare readers for her eventual ejection from the party and those who may want to associate with her outside the party are also traitors and an enemies of the interests of the country as defined by President Mugabe. For Mujuru to be accepted outside the party she also has to shake-off the traitor tag.

Tabloids make extensive use of graphics and colour pages to simplify complex issues as they consider audiences to be less intelligent to understand complex issues and therefore need more pictures and less words (Bird 1992, Sparks 2000, Franklin 1997, Gripsrud 2000). *The Herald* employed these tabloid styles by making use of colour pages and large photographs which are larger than the articles, especially on the front pages.

In the allegations of Mujuru providing a breeding ground for the formation of opposition political parties such as MDC and Mavambo Kusile Dawn in the story *Mujuru linked to MDC, Mavambo, Divisive parties formed in VP's house, Condone graft, factionalism (18/10/14)*, the paper makes use of large manipulated pictures with Grace Mugabe seeming to have no kind words to then ZANU PF Mashonaland East chairman Ray Kaukonde. This is meant to show that Grace can discipline and reprimand Kaukonde and that she is in a superior position when in actual fact Kaukonde refused to take her orders at the rally where the statements were made. The story also makes outlandish claims that Mujuru has shares in private newspapers such as *Daily News* and *NewsDay*, that the two publications are part and parcel of the opposition MDC-T party and that journalists are being paid \$200 by Mujuru to write sensational stories in her favour.

The allegations were derived from mere hearsay which *The Herald* took as authentic facts in the absence of tangible evidence that Mujuru had shares in these newspapers, and that the publications are part of the MDC-T since the shareholding of these newspapers is in the public domain. *The Herald*, in typical tabloid style of trying to grab attention, simply reported the statements by Grace Mugabe as authentic thus insulting the intelligence of the audiences who have a right to be informed with accurate information in order for them to make informed decisions on the issue.

Furthermore, the article is based on sensational claims by First Lady Grace Mugabe that journalists from *Daily News* and *NewsDay* are covering Mujuru because they are hungry due to the effect of sanctions and urges them to tell Morgan Tsvangirai how sanctions have negatively affected them. These sentiments have become some kind of a cliché in what has been described as illegal sanctions by the ZANU PF party since the turn of the millennium. By publishing such statements *The Herald* was simply playing to the gallery.

### **4.3 Incompetent leader/simplistic frame**

This frame depicts Mujuru as an incompetent and simplistic leader who cannot deal with complicated issues to do with statecraft. In this frame she is a leader who makes decisions without critical thought and reflection about the repercussions and one who is ready to embrace quisling politics and simplistic views that if she takes office Western countries will pour in money to develop the country. She is depicted as a plain and unimaginative thinker who is not capable of coming up with a sound economic blueprint for the country.

To further bring out this frame, the story *President breaks silence on Mujuru... raps simplistic thinking... collusion with opposition, Westerners 3/12/14* will be analysed.

Figure 4



# President breaks silence on Mujuru

• ... raps simplistic thinking • ... collusion with opposition, Westerners

Lloyd Gumbo  
Senior Reporter

PRESIDENT Mugabe yesterday broke his silence on Vice President Joice Mujuru, describing her as simplistic in thought to run a country because of her readiness to embrace quisling politics.

He said the embattled vp did not want Zimbabwe to go for elections last year in sync with the MDC position.

He made the remarks while addressing service chiefs and the new executive of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association at ZANU-PF Headquarters yesterday where the latter, led by Foreign Affairs Deputy Minister Christopher Mutsaers, were being introduced to him.

President Mugabe urged the new war veterans executive to be united and have a common purpose than bicker for positions which destroyed organisations.

"We are experiencing it for the first time in ZANU-PF and for that matter it's a woman who is saying ndakudawo kumbogara," President Mugabe said, drawing applause from the service chiefs and war veterans.

"And the consequences, ah no hapana anombofunga kuti can I actually handle the country nemapressures ese aya?"

Listen to audio clip on  
[www.herald.co.zw](http://www.herald.co.zw)

"We know the infiltration that has gone on. We know the discussions that have been done 'oh tinozoita link up nemdc toita pamwechete and America then will pour lots of money, Britain, ummmmh you know that simplistic thinking. Simplistic thinking. I don't trust a white man at all. Never!" he said.

Service chiefs who attended the meeting include Zimbabwe Defence Forces Commander General Constantine Chiwenga, Air Force of Zimbabwe Commander Air Marshall Perrance Shiri, Zimbabwe Republic Police Commissioner-General Augustine Chihuri, Zimbabwe Prison and Correctional Services Commissioner Paradzai Zimondi, Central Intelligence Organisation director-general Happyton Bonyongwe as well as Major-General Douglas Nyikayaramba who represented Zimbabwe National Army Commander Lieutenant-General Phillip Valerio Sibanda.

President Mugabe said former colonial



President Mugabe addresses the war veterans leadership and service chiefs in Harare yesterday

## ... as she misses congress' opening day

Farirai Machivenyika  
Senior Reporter

VICE President Joice Mujuru yesterday failed to attend the opening day of ZANU-PF's 6th National People's Congress that kicked off with the sitting of the Politburo at the party's headquarters.

It is the second time in as many weeks that the embattled Vice President has missed the Politburo, having failed to attend last week's session.

Apart from VP Mujuru, secretary for administration Cde Didymus Mutasa and secretary for transport and welfare Cde Nicholas Goche were also not present at yesterday's meeting.

VP Mujuru, Cde Mutasa and Cde Goche

Mujuru were not revealed yesterday, Cde Mutasa is understood to be in South Africa for treatment, while Cde Goche is admitted at a private hospital in Harare.

Addressing journalists after the meeting, ZANU-PF National Chairman and acting Secretary for Information and Publicity Cde Simon Khaya Moyo said chairmen of various Provincial Co-ordinating Committees had also presented names of people that were nominated to the Central Committee.

"The list of names as amended where applicable, would be presented to the Central Committee tomorrow for adoption," he said.

"On Matabeleland North the Politburo took a position that Cdes Jacob Mudenda,

Apart from the three, Cdes Tshatha Mguni and Elias Mavule who had been booted out at the inter-district meeting in Lupane on Saturday, were also restored to the Central Committee list.

The five officials were ousted at a chaotic meeting held in Lupane with Politburo member Cde Obert Mpofu being accused of instigating the move after dozens of ZANU-PF supporters from his Umguza constituency demonstrated at the venue while police had to be called in to maintain order.

Cde Khaya Moyo said the Politburo also nullified provincial elections held in Masvingo to choose a new substantive executive last weekend.

"The Politburo has declared null and



# President breaks silence on VP Mujuru

♦ From Page 1

those countries and dictated to them how they were to behave.

He said the development made it difficult for African countries to come up with common purpose at the African Union.

The President said Western countries influenced a number of African countries and leaders to discourage Zimbabwe from conducting a run-off election after the inconclusive March 29, 2008 harmonised elections where MDC-T leader, Mr Morgan Tsvangirai led in the first round by securing just more than 47 percent while President Mugabe had 43 percent though ZANU-PF beat MDC-T in both houses of parliament amassing 45.94 percent of the vote to MDC-T's 43.56 in the Senate; and 45.94 percent to 42.88 in the House of Assembly suffrage.

Yet the Constitution stated that for a Presidential candidate to be declared a winner, they were supposed to garner 50 plus one percent.

"Even Thabo Mbeki was saying no what use is there, the Europeans will not recognise you if you go for another election and win? Ah do I care for European recognition?

"The Inclusive Government was a humiliating thing but in fact even in politics you must have also a strategy that ah now this is what needs to be done. And Jabulani (Sibanda) was saying ah matengesa kuti muve in association naTsvangirai. Even my child Bellarmine was saying ah mabva mukubata Tsvangirai handidi. Dad I won't shake you. So you can see how humiliated I was. When you are rejected by your own son," President Mugabe said. He added that the MDC and some forces within ZANU-PF wanted the inclusive Government's life to be extended beyond the five-year term.

"But I knew of course that well we would get them. Fine we worked together, I gave Tsvangirai tea. He thought I had put poison in the tea so I drank the tea and gave him. But later on he was asking for more like Oliver Twist. In the meantime we were

## ... as she misses congress' opening day

♦ From Page 1

weekend. The Politburo has directed further that Cde (Paradzai) Chakona remains acting chairman and will lead the province to Congress," he said.

Cde Pupurai Togarepi had been elected substantive chairman following the vote of no confidence passed on the former chairman Brigadier General Kallisto Gwanetsa (Retired) for fanning factionalism and undermining the authority of the President.

Sources that attended yesterday meeting also said the Politburo dismissed attempts by the Matabeleland South Provincial Coordinating Committee to remove Cde Khaya Moyo and Minister of State for Provincial Affairs Cde Abednico Bhebhe from the Central Committee list.

The duo was accused of aligning themselves with VP Mujuru in her attempts to topple the President among other charges.

The Politburo dismissed the allegations as baseless and mischievous.

Meanwhile Cde Khaya also said everything was in place for a successful Congress.

"The Politburo met today and deliberated on the preparations for the 6th National People's Congress. You will be aware that His Excellency President Robert Mugabe visited the Congress venue yesterday. The First Lady Dr Grace Mugabe honoured us by visiting the conference venue today.

"I can confirm that the preparations for the Congress are now complete and the delegates start arriving tomorrow (today). It's really all systems go and we are all excited about the development and I am predicting that this would be the best Congress ever," Cde Khaya Moyo said.

Congress enters its second day today with the sitting of the Central Committee were the Central Committee report will be tabled.

not have elections...

"Even our side, our people didn't want elections. Vana Mai Mujuru didn't want elections. Why?

"There you are. So we had those elections our own way and we emerged 31st July with that resounding victory," said President Mugabe.

He said it was important for party cadres to remain steadfast on principles than sacrifice them for expediency or money.

He said some people including Americans and former Chinese ambassador to Zimbabwe Xin Shunkang thought ZANU-PF would lose the elections.

President Mugabe thanked the war veterans for throwing their weight behind his sole candidacy at the ZANU-PF 6th National People's Congress.

He said he would continue as

President Mugabe urged the war veterans to remain united and principled so that Government can recognise them even through creation of a specific ministry for them.

He said Government would endeavour to empower war veterans through various interventions. The President was responding to some of the resolutions of the war veterans at the congress that was held at Great Zimbabwe in Masvingo recently where the new executive was elected into office.

War veterans leader, Cde Christopher Mutsaers read out the resolutions among them their support for the amendment of the party constitution to ensure that there is one centre of power as well as President Mugabe's sole candidacy and First Lady Amai Grace Mugabe's ele-

### 4.3.1 Words and symbols

The headline “*President breaks silence on Mujuru. raps simplistic thinking... collusion with opposition, Westerners 3/12/14*)” conveys that Mujuru is a simplistic thinker for which she is criticised and this makes her collude with opposition parties and Western governments which want to effect regime change in the country. By colluding with such interests Mujuru is thus not aware of the repercussions since she thinks simplistically like a child. She is described as a strange woman whose quest for power is taboo for women. Also because of her simplistic nature, she thinks a country “can be run because of her readiness to embrace quisling politics”. According to the Oxford Students Dictionary a “quisling” is a traitor who collaborates with an invading enemy, a term derived from Vidkun Quisling (1907- 1945), a pro-Nazi Norwegian leader in the Second World War. The effect of describing her as a quisling is meant to show that indeed she is a simplistic thinker colluding with the enemies of the government to effect regime change.

### 4.3.2 Preferred meanings

In the story “*President breaks silence on Mujuru. raps simplistic thinking... collusion with opposition, Westerners 3/12/14*), *The Herald* sought to portray Mujuru as unfit for both the office of the vice president and any other role as a leader of a country because she is a simple minded person as statecraft demands a critical thinker not a simpleton. By portraying her as simple thinker it thus explains the danger of having her as a leader as she can be manipulated by Western countries. The perception that she is the agent of infiltration by hostile elements is spelt in the quote below

We know the infiltration that has gone on. We know the discussions that have been done “oh tinozoita link up ne MDC toita pamwechete and America then will pour lots of money. Britain ummmh you know that simplistic thinking. I don’t trust a white man at all. Never! he said (President Mugabe).

The preferred meaning of the story is highlighted by the concurrent story on the same page.....*as she misses congress’ opening day* where VP Mujuru’s close allies Didymus Mutasa and Nicholas Goche also missed congress due to speculative reports that they are ill. The description of a simplistic thinker is made in an address to the war veterans and echoes the call made for her to step down, “*Step down , war vets tell Mujuru*” 17/11/14. This buttresses the idea that Mujuru is an outcast who should be rejected and ejected. The allegations of trying to



oust the president are also repeated in the story with the statement that “VP Mujuru, Cde Mutasa and Cde Goche are the brains behind the plot to assassinate President Mugabe”.

### 4.3.3 Omission analysis

The two stories “*President breaks silence on Mujuru... raps simplistic thinking... collusion with opposition, Westerners .....as she misses congress’ opening day (3/12/14)*” miss the critical point that it is normal for a deputy to have ambitions to succeed the incumbent. *The Herald* instead concurs with ZANU PF in criminalising presidential ambitions. The stories also make an erroneous assumption that a country should have specific relations with certain countries which is not the case in a global world where there are no permanent friends and enemies but permanent interests sought and defended through conflict, cooperation and co-option. There is also no critical analysis of the issue at hand as the story offers little critical evidence to show that Mujuru is a simplistic thinker.

Also making alliances cannot be described as simplistic thinking. It can only be viewed as strategic thinking. Another aspect is that the story does not tell readers why despite being described as a simplistic thinker Mujuru was selected to be vice president for 10 years. It could be that President Mugabe preferred a weak, unquestioning and unambitious deputy like the previous ones (Simon Muzenda, Joshua Nkomo, John Nkomo and Joseph Msika) who seemed content with being deputies of President Mugabe, hence the accusations of Mujuru trying to take over power. What one can read is a tacit consensus that ZANU PF embraces an unstated policy on life presidency and still entertains the one party state idea which was abandoned in the early 1990s. Assertions by war veterans leader Christopher Mutsvangwa that ZANU PF’s constitution should be amended to create one centre of power as well as making President Mugabe the sole candidate and First Lady’s elevation to the post of secretary for Women’s Affairs uncontested were not questioned by *The Herald*.

Such an uncritical approach omits a crucial fact that uncontested power is inimical to democracy. If the ruling party creates positions as a form of entitlement then can such a leader be expected to be receptive to power competition at national level? This points to a scenario where they may refuse to hand over power, much akin to creating a life presidency. The repercussions of the notion of one centre of power were also not questioned. Also what needs to be questioned is why all the people who oppose the president, from Ndabaningi Sithole and Morgan Tsvangirai to Mujuru are accused of treason.

#### 4.3.4 Limiting debate

The stories “*President breaks silence on Mujuru... raps simplistic thinking... collusion with opposition, Westerners .....as she misses congress’ opening day (3/12/14)*” are one-sided versions devoid of alternative voices as expected in a news story for readers to clearly understand an issues. Such kind of writing leaves a lot of unanswered questions and violates the attribute of a news story which should be balanced an impartial to allow readers to make informed decisions (McNair 2001).

*The Herald*, as in its other stories on Mujuru, simply regurgitates statements by the President without any critical analysis. The story “*President breaks silence on Mujuru... raps simplistic thinking... collusion with opposition, Westerners (3/12/14)*” also criminalises and belittles women as people who are incapable of leading a country. This is not consistent with global trends as countries such as Britain have been ruled by women and currently has a female leader. However, this depiction of women as not leadership material brings to the fore the perceptions about women by ZANU PF and their role in the liberation war. The concurrent story .....*as she misses congress’ opening day3/12/14* also makes simplistic connections based on speculation that Mujuru, Mutasa and Goche were not feeling well as a sign that they are guilty of the allegations of trying to kill the president. Furthermore, like tabloids, the story goes on to provide information to the effect that the president was once rejected by his son after the president had shaken hands with Morgan Tsvangirai and jokes such as that Tsvangirai was always craving for tea from the President when he was Prime Minister in the inclusive government. To this end the president says, “Fine, we worked together, I gave Tsvangirai tea. He thought I had put poison in the tea so I drank tea and gave him. But later on he was asking for more tea like Oliver Twist”

Such information does not really add value in terms of creating an informed citizenry but it is just exciting fantasy which is a staple for tabloids and reduces the whole inclusive government to a tea-drinking exercise. The inclusion of such information adds no value and insults the intelligence of the readers of *The Herald* as it appeals to the basest of human fantasy just like what tabloids are meant to do (Sloan 2001).

In this frame Mujuru is depicted as not only incompetent in her role as the vice president, but also naive and just makes simple assumptions in all aspects of life and government which results in disastrous consequences. Her naivety and simplistic thinking is mainly derived from

her ambitions to become the leader of the country by simply assuming that by virtue of being appointed vice president it meant that it will be automatic that she will get the presidency. This framing stems from the allegations that she is power-hungry and is leading a putschist cabal to unconstitutionally take power from the president.

Being a simplistic thinker, Mujuru lost the opportunity to be a good leader and thus learnt nothing from President Mugabe by making simplistic assumptions. This frame is echoed in such stories as *“Simplistic” assumptions that cost* (11/12/14) and *“President breaks silence on Mujuru; Raps simplistic thinking; Collusion with opposition, westerners”* (03/12/14).

Perhaps the major highlight of the simplistic framing is captured in the editorial *“It’s all very constitutional Cde VP”* (17/11/14). In this editorial, *The Herald* portrayed Mujuru as a naive individual who fails to understand that the post of the Vice President is not a national mandate since it is only the president who is elected to represent the whole country, especially with reference to the text in her statement that she was “an elected servant of the people of Zimbabwe”. The editorial reminds her that she was only elected to serve the people of Mount Darwin North in the National Assembly.

The editorial sought to depict her as someone who cannot distinguish between representing a constituency and representing the whole country. It also echoes the sentiments that Mujuru has unbridled aspirations to take over power through unconstitutional means as alleged in other reports by *The Herald*. As a simplistic thinker and an incompetent person, Mujuru is a person with no support or someone not worth supporting. This is revealed in a story *“Outrage over VP Mujuru Statement: Provincial chairs dismiss support: Urged to address allegations against her”* (18/11/14). The story expresses outrage on the statement by Mujuru that she will serve in any elected position. This statement is used as evidence to confirm that she has ambitions to take over power. In other allegations, Mujuru is also accused of using what is described as a “presidential pose and tone” by using the term “fellow citizens and countrymen” in her statement to the media denying the allegations levelled against her.

Mujuru’s concluding statement in her response where she stated that “I thank the people of Zimbabwe for your continued support” is depicted as outrageous. *The Herald* uses provincial Chairpersons of ZANU PF to deny the fact that she has any support from anyone and that no one would support a person linked to the murder of the president. One of the provincial chairpersons described Mujuru as a hitherto murderous, cruel and evil person; “We don’t

support a corrupt person using money and other people to want to assassinate President Mugabe; we did not know she is such a cruel and evil woman”.

This description of Mujuru as a rogue element who does not deserve any form of support and worth expelling from the party is also echoed by tertiary education students in a story “*Students back resignation call*” (18/11/14).

The simplistic frame is further highlighted in an editorial entitled “*None but ourselves can build Zimbabwe*” (01/12/14) where Mujuru is accused of betraying the country through the abuse of her position. The abuse has by default made her a public vulture, simplistic thinker seduced by false promises dangled by the western powers.

She is labelled a regime change agent who together with her allies had the will to sacrifice “the whole country in exchange for thirty pieces of silver in their individual pockets”. *The Herald* attempts to bring out the treacherous nature of Mujuru by presenting her as a semi-literate person who sought to depose the president who was her benefactor - who appointed her a minister at the age of 25, educated her at night and then elevated her to the position of the Vice President in 2004 at the expense of a more fitting candidate, Emmerson Mnangagwa, but she immediately started scheming to unseat President Mugabe.

The simplistic frame also comes to the fore in an article entitled “*Five things revealed about VP Mujuru*” (4/12/14). The article refers to Mujuru as a simplistic thinker and a rude and rebellious child. It alleges that by refusing to apologise for her misdemeanours and failing to attend the 2014 ZANU PF National People’s Congress, Mujuru behaved like a “rude and undisciplined character who refuses food and stays outdoors after being censured for a misdemeanour”. Mujuru is also described as a simplistic thinker who believes that joining the opposition will make Western governments pour in money into the country. This article builds on the statement by the President and earlier reports linking Mujuru to simplistic thinking that Western governments will bring money once she takes over power.

Opinion writers were also key in the framing of Mujuru as a simplistic thinker with some writers using derogatory language against her. For example, the article entitles “*VP Mujuru: A victim of political miscalculation*” (09/12/14) describes Mujuru as; “an idiot than a sound revolutionary worth emulating; impatient, blind and miscalculating and one who is misled by bad advisors”.

She is also described as a coup plotter who dined and held secret meetings with former United States of America ambassadors. By failing to respond timely to the allegations, Mujuru is ridiculed for being un-respectful and unfit for the presidency and her silence showed she had no respect for the president and that she saw herself as ripe for the presidency. She is described as unrespectful and with no credibility because; “It is now an open secret that the VP has lost her credibility as a revolutionary par excellence to become a traitor”.

In this sense, Mujuru is thus guilty as charged by failing to defend herself and attend the 6<sup>th</sup> ZANU PF National People’s Congress to explain herself to the party membership. This is seen as a reflection that she was afraid of facing the reality of her “evil and satanic deeds”.

In coming to this conclusion, the writer uses examples of past ZANU PF members who failed to make it politically outside ZANU PF. These include Edgar Tekere who started the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) in the 1990s, Simba Makoni and Dumiso Dabengwa in Mavambo Kusile Dawn (MKD). These leaders who thought that they could challenge President Mugabe ended up “increasing the list of nonentities that retired into political dustbin”.

With these examples in mind, *The Herald* creates the impression that a simplistic thinker and a non-calculative person such as Mujuru will thus become an object of shame because; “Her miscalculated manoeuvres soiled her once glorified image in the country. All her trust vanished overnight like morning dew. Shame on her”.

Another ground for the simpleton tag on Mujuru is in the criticism of her economic blueprint – Blueprint to Unlock Investment and Leverage for Development (BUILD). In an article entitled “ZANU PF dismisses Mujuru manifesto” (10/09/15), BUILD is dismissed as a “putschists” blueprint plagiarised from the MDC blueprint Agenda for Real Transformation (ART). The blueprint is described as one designed to repeal the indigenisation policies such as the land reform and a way of bringing back the whites.

Through the extensive use of MDC-T spokesperson Obert Gutu, it frames the BUILD blueprint as competing to access donor funds with the MDC-T crying foul over the plagiarism. The quote used to support this position from the MDC-T however suggests the opposite. Gutu did not complain of plagiarism but stressed that there are similarities in their way of thinking and that expressed in BUILD blueprint. Gutu said;

... in a way, the Mujuru policy blueprint is speaking our language, the document is singing our chorus, as the MDC-T we feel humbled and flattered that the BUILD

manifesto mirrors what we have already stated in our JIUCE and ART policy blueprints.

Mujuru is also described as an incapable leader who does not have the metal stamina to come up with a blueprint such as BUILD – “*Mujuru: Reluctant, Incapable BUILD-er*” (09/09/15). The article portrays her as someone not capable of anything and the blueprint is credited to either Didymus Mutasa, Rugare Gumbo or Ibbo Mandaza because she is “generally plain, unimaginative and not so bright woman, Mujuru has not shown any capability as a strategic thinker”.

This lack of leadership qualities is believed to have led her to squander a lifetime opportunity of becoming the leader of the country, especially after working for 10 years with President Mugabe. She thus failed to learn because she surrounded herself with poor thinkers such as Rugare Gumbo and Didymus Mutasa who are also said to have led miserable lives. The article also attributes the failure by Mujuru to defend herself as a sign that she is guilty and has been hit hard because “there is a whole world of difference between silence and retreat that is strategic and silence that is clueless and beaten”.

Mujuru is thus not capable of leading a political party and will eventually fail even if she establishes one;

Even if Mujuru were to lead this party and we wait for it. It will not be something earth shattering, we have been down that road before. But who are we to stop people from build-ing castles in the air.

The frame of a simplistic thinker is also brought out by the letters to the editor column. The BUILD economic blueprint is dismissed through a letter to the editor – “*Mujuru’s manifesto won’t fool us* (10/09/15). The blueprint is portrayed as an opposition manifesto, right wing document which is similar to the “multiple times beaten Tsvangirai philosophy from Bretton Woods institutions hell bent on reversing the gains of our independence, land reform and indigenisation”.

In the dismissal of Mujuru capabilities and BUILD blueprint, she is portrayed as a leader who puts herself first and people later – “*BUILD: Mujuru first, people second*” (15/09/15). BUILD is described as a personal manifesto meant to promote a Mujuru cult at the expense of the people. To buttress the cultic position, an example and reference of Simba Makoni, who is alleged to have urged people to vote for him in 2008 because of who he is and not what he would offer – “Vote for me because I am Simba, I am a brand, I will tell you the organisation

later” is invoked. Such an example is used to show that Mujuru is trying to achieve personal objectives and is not motivated by the interests of the people she purports to represent. The manifesto is also dismissed as being inappropriate for Zimbabweans because it is meant to satisfy the personal ego of Mujuru;

The people of Zimbabwe have no role in managing arrogantly inflated egos. And the people of Zimbabwe are not looking for a messiah too. So those with highly chequered history of corrupt activities should remove their fake cherub wings and their made up halos. History has shown us what they can and cannot do.

As an incapable leader with simplistic thinking Mujuru is predestined for eventual downfall – “*Mujuru is the new Humpty Dumpty*” (25/06/16). Mujuru is thus the new “humpty dumpty” like other politicians in Zimbabwe who have failed to win political power and “in the fullness of time Mujuru will come crushing down irrevocably”. This article is highly critical of the depiction of Mujuru as “Mother Zimbabwe” because she is known to be a very cruel person as her “meanness is known in her home province as she failed to develop a school or road or harness the potential but instead became filthy rich while the people wallow in poverty since 1980”. The effect of such framing is to construct and instil hopelessness in her leadership capabilities and to make it clear to would-be admirers that as a leader she is not worth supporting.

The incapability frame is also highlighted by her alleged failure to represent women during her time as the Minister of Gender as well as the sensational claims that she facilitated the abuse of girls in the guerrilla camps during the 1970 liberation struggle. *The Herald* mocks Mujuru’s portrayal as “Mother Zimbabwe” who will deliver the country from the promised land of Canaan because of her greediness arguing that “with all the suffering that comes with a journey to Canaan. Mujuru is likely to eat all the manna and all the quails that descend from heaven. She is known to be that greedy”. As a simplistic thinker and incapable leader Mujuru is destined for failure and “will break and fall to pieces like the proverbial Humpty Dumpty”.



# 5 things 2014 revealed about VP Mujuru



Tichaona Zindoga  
Political Editor

Two days ago, President Mugabe gave us an illuminate description of she being desperate to be leader. He said his Number Two was of a "simple mind" unable to "withstand the pressures of statecraft."

IT IS not too early to be writing reviews about the year 2014, which may well go down in history as one of the most politically charged and decisive moments in Zimbabwe.

In fact, the year is mortally ripe, with only a couple of weeks before its end and the ongoing ZANU-PF 6th National People's Congress is the biggest thing left on the calendar, after Christmas.

It is the same congress that has given 2014 its decisive character and tinge and some of the most important milestones is affording the world a glimpse into the real character and substance of one Joice Teurai Ropa Mujuru, who happens to be the country's Vice President.

Below are five things that Zimbabweans did not know much of this liberation war legend (or myth?) who was married to General Solomon Mujuru, alias Rex Nkhomo, the national hero.

## Deposing President Mugabe

Treachery is the word.

It is common knowledge that VP Mujuru owes almost everything she has politically to President Mugabe who made her a minister at Independence even though she was semi-literate. To be illiterate is lacking the ability to read and write.

However, President Mugabe took the young veteran of the struggle in his wing, making her the youngest Cabinet minister at the age of 25 and suffering to educate her during evenings.

She has been part of the Executive ever since. In fact, her rise to the second highest office in the land and ZANU-PF party in 2004 owed to the benevolence of President Mugabe who indulged a change in the party constitution to award the vice presidency to a woman.

Emmerson Mnangagwa had won the nominations meriting a run for Number Two. Joice Mujuru was not even the most senior woman in ZANU-PF then. And how has she paid back?

Recent revelations indicate that no sooner had she settled in her donated



VP Mujuru

role did she start planning to topple President Mugabe, her benefactor.

In 2006, Mashonaland East Province mounted an abortive Mai Mujuru-linked revolt against President Mugabe.

She then became part of the Mavambo/Kusile/Dawn project in which Simba Makoni broke from the party and challenged President Mugabe during the 2008 elections.

While this scheme failed to produce a leader in Makoni, the engineered split helped the opposition better to garner a parliamentary majority and a first round win for Morgan Tsvangirai in the presidential poll.

President Mugabe did well to recover in the run-off but was subsequently forced into a humiliating coalition with the opposition.

Meanwhile, Mai Mujuru did not lose sight of deposing President Mugabe.

She formed an alliance with the opposition, which, it is emerging, could be used to impeach President Mugabe.

Little wonder Mai Mujuru resisted the 2013 elections as they clearly upset her schemes. But she had another option.

Her factional sidekicks such as Rugare Gumbo and Didymus Mutasa have been outed as having planned to assassinate President Mugabe if he did not step down in her favour.

## Corruption

Mai Mujuru shocked the whole nation last year when she castigated the media for exposing the rot in parastatals which were being cannibalised and stripped by their CEOs.

This was at a time when many people

thought that Government had finally turned a corner and had taken a war to corrupt officials.

Mai Mujuru did not think so. She claimed that such exposure would destroy "the party". Now not many people are wondering why she made that indefensibly outrageous remark.

She has been exposed as a stinkingly corrupt person herself: being involved in anything from extortion from companies to exporting GMO chickens against Government policy and instructing Zimra not to tax her contraband.

She has also developed extensive networks and fronts that include her daughters and politicians such as Ray kaukonde.

## Downing a chopper

That was the most heroic act that was attributed to Teurai Ropa.

Now from what we know, it wasn't the case — and many people of the liberation era knew about it. And guess who spread the propaganda?

It was, according to war veterans chairman Cde Chris Mutsaers, none other than Webster Shamu whose alliance to Mai Mujuru has lived thus far as he also happens to have been in her faction seeking to depose President Mugabe.

By the way, a Cde Linda Mangwende has come through to claim not only the heroic act but also the picture that apparently is mis-captioned in Mai Mujuru's favour.

## Not contrite

After the massive exposure of her misdemeanours lately, Mai Mujuru was given a couple of basic choices: she had to ask

for forgiveness from President Mugabe or resign from her position, which would show her contrition. She has done neither. In fact, she is doing worse.

Mai Mujuru has lately been boycotting Politburo meetings and crucially the opening of the ongoing Congress.

She may have her reasons, but she is increasingly cutting a figure of a rude, ill-disciplined child who refuses food and stays outdoors after being censured for a misdemeanour.

Those who follow sports, in particular team sports, may think of a player who rates himself highly and refuses to train or travel with the team because he has had a bust up with one member of the team or even the coach.

A word for it in sporting circles is ill-discipline.

It remains to be seen what Mai Mujuru's game plan is. Or is she planning to go all out and openly form alliances with the opposition as has been widely suspected?

## Simple mind, unfit leader

Lastly, this is the crunch.

Two days ago, President Mugabe gave us an illuminate description of her being desperate to be leader.

He said his Number Two was of a "simple mind" unable to "withstand the pressures of statecraft."

Her simple mind makes her think, according to President Mugabe, that if she joins with the opposition Western governments will pour money into the country.

In other words, Zimbabwe does not need the kind blessing in, and of, such a leader.



#### Figure 5 (above)

*The Herald* made extensive use of the visual picture (such as the one above) showing a confused and grinning Mujuru to show that she is both troubled and incompetent because of simplistic thinking. Respondents however argued that the perception that the depiction of Joice Mujuru as an incompetent leader was not based on any truth as the same publication has in the past praised her as a competent leader as one respondent argued that;

*The Herald* was therefore deployed by those who control its editorial to attack Mujuru using such invectives in order to undermine her authority and political standing and it became the mouthpiece for the political leadership that was behind Mujuru political troubles. Information was deliberately fed to *The Herald* for publicity. *The Herald* became a willing tool in the hands of political actors. So in essence the newspaper was not making decision or choices on its editorial but essentially was under the control of political actors. (Interview 24/02/17).

An analysis of the above frame makes one to deduce that *The Herald* portrayal of Mujuru is a case of double standards as it contradicts itself just as it sought to frame Mujuru in the traitor frame. Thus the framing by *The Herald* is influenced by some forces beyond the control of its editors and the frames are an indicator of the power dynamics at any given time which points to the fact that the newspaper does not follow any journalistic standards and is informed by what the wielders of power decide at any time.

In the incompetent leader framing, diagrams are also used, just like in tabloids, to promote visual attraction in the story (*Mujuru headed for sunset: MDC-T, analysts slates manifesto 10/09/15*) through the use of a big ship with a Zimbabwe national flag with Mujuru is a small capsizing boat following others who have drowned in murky political wars such as Simba Makoni, Edgar Tekere, and Margaret Dongo. This is meant to demonstrate that if one leaves ZANU PF they are headed for a political sunset. The move to use diagrams is an indication of the publication's desire to simplify complex issues and the belief that audiences are not intelligent enough to understand the issues a technique employed by tabloids (Kurtz 1996).

#### 4.4 The corrupt frame

This frame emanates from a series of business deals and activities involving Mujuru directly and indirectly which are described as smacking of corruption. The corrupt nature of Mujuru is also linked to the activities and the estate of her late husband General Solomon Mujuru which she inherited. The corrupt activities of Mujuru are portrayed as resulting in the destruction of the Zimbabwean economy, including all struggling state enterprises. To highlight this kind of

framing, the story “Jabu confesses to VP Mujuru deals.....confirms extortion allegations....VP’s hands not clean: Analysts (28/10/14)” will be analysed below.

# Jabu confesses to VP Mujuru deals

• . . . confirms extortion allegations • VP’s hands not clean: Analysts

Zvamaida Murwira  
Senior Reporter

ZIMBABWE National Liberation War Veterans Association national chairperson Cde Jabulani Sibanda has all but sensationally confirmed that corruption and extortion allegations being levelled against Vice President Joice Mujuru are true, legal analysts have said.

The analysts said Cde Sibanda effectively admitted that the allegations are true in an interview with NewsDay yesterday when he was reported to have said it was wrong for the First Lady Amai Grace Mugabe and other ZANU-PF officials to publicly criticise VP Mujuru for “crimes” which were allegedly committed by her late husband Retired General Solomon Mujuru.

This, analysts have said, was a telling even if tacit confirmation that Vice President Mujuru’s hands might not be clean after all, since they were running a family business with her husband where she would be conversant on how equity would have been acquired in companies in which they had a pecuniary interest, and since she has inherited the late General Mujuru’s entire estate.

“If President Mugabe does wrong, I won’t insult Grace Mugabe.

“So you can’t insult Joice Mujuru because she is not Solomon Mujuru who they accuse of all those things. You can’t attack MaNdlovu my wife because of my wrongs,” Cde Sibanda was quoted as saying by NewsDay.

In an interview last night, respected

• To Page 2



President Mugabe addresses mourners at the funeral of Mr Maxwell Chadoka in Mandara, Harare, yesterday while the First Lady Amai Grace Mugabe (right) and the deceased's widow Mrs Candida Chadoka (left) listen. — (See story on Page 2)



# Jabu confesses to VP Mujuru deals

♦ From Page 1

Harare lawyer and legislator Mr Jonathan Samkange said what Cde Sibanda was saying constituted a confession that what VP Mujuru was doing was not consistent with the law.

"Yes, it is a confession of wrongdoing by the family," he said. "If she did not agree with what was done by her husband she would come out in the open to say this is what happened and dissociate herself from such conduct. She had that opportunity to dissociate herself, but she has up to now not done that."

Another Harare lawyer who preferred anonymity for fear of jeopardising his chances in today's interviews to be considered as a High Court judge concurred with Mr Samkange.

"What Cde Sibanda is simply telling us is that his principal, which he so adores despite her inevitable fall, was equally guilty by association," said the lawyer. "It is common cause that this was a family business and Vice President Mujuru would obviously know that people were being extorted and she has not distanced herself from that."

Political analyst Goodwine Mureriwa said what the First Lady said against VP Mujuru could not just be dismissed as baseless.

He said the allegations had far reaching implications if people were to go to the bottom of the matter.

"These allegations should be taken seriously," he said. "There are serious legal implications. That is why the Politburo wants Cde Oppah Muchinguri to give them a report. Cde Sibanda should allow party organs to handle them."

Amai Mugabe has levelled allegations of illicit diamond dealings, extortion, and bribery against VP Mujuru, saying she had been extorting 10 percent shareholding in several compa-

nies.

VP Mujuru has also been accused of fanning factionalism in her bid to oust President Mugabe in office.

In his first public comment on the diamond fever that gripped Zimbabwe in 2007, President Mugabe said key players in the precious stones saga were the same figures behind machinations to nudge him from office.

In an interview with ZBCTV ahead of his 83rd birthday in February 2007, the President said he disapproved of senior ZANU-PF members involved in the diamond trade, saying it was an industry where "suspicion could easily be raised."

"They joined (diamond mining) openly, they said yes, we have shares. But you see, it is the sense of doing it, kuti unozosvika pakuita izvozvo uri member yePolitburo kunobatana nemabhunhu arikutsvaga mari, zvamboita sei (How do you become involved in this sort of thing when you are a Politburo member, partnering white businessmen, why?).

Although no names were mentioned, the VP's late husband, Rtd Gen Solomon Mujuru was the only Politburo member who was then known publicly to have an interest in diamonds.

Apart from having an interest in Africa Consolidated Resources (ACR), the late Rtd Gen Mujuru also held a significant state in River Ranch Limited through his Khupukile Investments, on whose board the former army general sat.

His legal counsel at River Ranch Limited was George Smith, a retired judge who served under both Ian Smith and President Mugabe as Cabinet secretary.

Smith was appointed to the bench in 1984 and was the only white judge left on the bench when he retired in 2003.

Figure 6

## 4.4.1 Words and symbols

The story *Jabu confesses to VP Mujuru deals*.....confirms extortion allegations....VP's hands not clean: Analysts 28/10/14 admits that war veterans leader Jabulani Sibanda "sensationally"

confirms the corruption and extortion allegations are true. What emerges from this admission is the fact that *The Herald* is comfortable with printing sensational stories just like tabloids. And if Sibanda's confirmation is "sensational" then a serious publication like *The Herald* should not have repeated the spreading and printing of sensational information from newspapers it accuses of behaving like a tabloid such as *NewsDay*.

By inheriting the estate Mujuru becomes corrupt because if she was clean she would have rejected the estate. *The Herald* uses the "confession" by expelled ZANU PF politician and war veteran Jabulani Sibanda in the story to portray that Joice Mujuru is a corrupt person.

In the story, Sibanda sought to exonerate Mujuru from the activities of her late husband, claiming that if a person's husband or wife is corrupt it does not follow that the other is naturally corrupt. Sibanda made the "confession" in an article published by a private national daily newspaper *NewsDay* by giving an example of the president's wife Grace Mugabe, arguing that "if the president does wrong I won't insult Grace Mugabe. So you can't insult Joice Mujuru because she is not Solomon Mujuru who they accuse of all these things (corruption and illicit business deals - my own emphasis)"

This quote is cited as evidence that Joice Mujuru's hands are not clean through the use of legal experts to back the claims that if a husband is corrupt the wife is also corrupt. In this frame, the allegations of corruption are linked to statements by First Lady Grace Mugabe's claims that Mujuru is heavily involved in illicit diamond dealings, extortion and bribery. To buttress the corruption allegations, the story makes reference to a 2007 interview on the 83<sup>rd</sup> birthday anniversary of President Mugabe in which he disapproved of certain politburo members who were partnering whites in diamond businesses. The article then brings in the name of Solomon Mujuru stating that "although no names were mentioned (in the 2007 interview) the VP's late husband Retired General Solomon Mujuru was the only member of (the politburo) who was then known publicly to have an interest in diamonds".

#### **4.4.2 Preferred meanings**

*The Herald* sought to prepare the audience to have a perception that VP Mujuru is corrupt because she inherited the estate of her late husband Solomon who is described as corrupt by *The Herald*. Also *The Herald* uses a *NewsDay* story in which Jabulani Sibanda was questioning the labelling of VP Mujuru as corrupt. Through the use of analysts, referred to as "respected",

Harare lawyer Jonathan Samkange who argues that what Sibanda said was a “confession” and that by inheriting the estate Mujuru was guilty by association and therefore corrupt.

#### **4.4.3 Omission analysis**

The story omits critical information in that an analysis of the statement that “If President Mugabe does wrong I won’t insult Grace” *The Herald* does not question the validity of such a question but in fact uses such a statement as confirmation that Joice Mujuru is corrupt. *The Herald* deliberately ignores the simple logic asked by Sibanda that “so you can’t insult Joice Mujuru because she is not Solomon who they accuse of all these things. You can’t attack MaNdlovu, my wife, because of my wrongs”. It instead accepts that Joice is guilty because her husband committed the crimes.

By treating the interview by *NewsDay* as a confession, *The Herald* seems to be inventing facts because Jabulani Sibanda was just being interviewed and it was simply not a confession. It is only the affected person or witnesses who make confessions. It is not clear when an interview turns out to be a confession. Furthermore, *The Herald* does not have evidence to confirm that Joice Mujuru is corrupt but instead relies on another newspaper story and twists the facts to peddle sensationalism. The statement by one of the sources, Goodwine Mureriwa, where he makes the assertion that what “the First Lady said (allegations of bribery, corruption and illicit diamond deals) against VP Mujuru should not be dismissed as baseless and there was need to go to the bottom of the matter”, point to the fact that these allegations were not yet proven and that they could also be baseless.

#### **4.4.4 Limiting debate**

The story “*Jabu confesses to VP Mujuru deals.....confirms extortion allegations....VP’s hands not clean: Analysts (28/10/14)*” limits debate in that it is just a patched up story using sources who make unintelligible and simplistic conclusions. For example, Jonathan Samkange who is described as a “respected” lawyer concurs with the twisted facts by *The Herald* that an interview of Jabulani Sibanda by *NewsDay* was a confession by arguing that;

Yes, it is a confession of wrong doing by the family,” he said. “If she did not agree with what was done by her husband she would have come out in the open to say this is what happened and dissociate herself from such a conduct. She had that opportunity to dissociate herself but she has up to now done that.

This statement actually shows that a respected lawyer should have questioned how an interview becomes a confession. Moreover in making the unrealistic suggestions that a wife could come

up and say my husband is corrupt and also that if the husband is corrupt, then the wife also becomes corrupt, the respectability of this lawyer is questionable especially when he is also a member of parliament for ZANU PF. It is possible that he could be belonging to some of the factions that were pushing Mujuru out of the party and colluding with *The Herald* to make such simplistic connections.

Another aspect of tabloid formatting is the use of anonymous sources such as the lawyer who preferred anonymity by arguing that he risks his chances of being considered for a High Court Judge. One may question the integrity of such a person because if he/she wants to be a High Court judge then an analysis mentioning their name would actually help in making people see that he/she exercises sound thinking. The lawyer also makes the same unintelligent and wild claim made by Samkange that Joice Mujuru should have openly declared that her husband is corrupt and she is clean by arguing that “it is common cause that this was a family business and VP Mujuru would obviously know that people were being extorted and she has not distanced herself . . .”

A prospective High Court judge would not think that if a husband is corrupt then the wife is guilty by association. Furthermore, the sensational allegations that people were being extorted is not backed by evidence except by other sensational allegations by the First Lady that VP Mujuru was involved in illicit diamond dealings, bribery and extortion of 10 percent shareholding in several companies including private newspapers which are perceived to be sympathetic to her in light of the attacks by her political rivals.

An analysis of this article points towards fiction writing of a piece compiled using distorted information without seeking alternative views of the affected persons. Also the use of sources whose judgement do not tally with their depictions as respected lawyers or one being considered for a job as a High Court judge raises suspicions on the authenticity of the comments. This kind of writing shows that *The Herald* is gravitating into the world of make believe.

The late General Mujuru is described as a selfish, corrupt and reckless individual in a story entitled “*Court orders Mujuru to pay \$ 1, 5 million (07/11/2015)*” - a description that *The Herald* consistently applied to Joice Mujuru as something that naturally flows in her blood.

Moving away from the corrupt nature of her late husband, *The Herald* specifically focuses on the alleged corrupt deals that she is involved in such as in the story “*Mujuru fingered in chicken*

*scam (11/11/14)*. The allegations in this story are that Mujuru directed Secretary for Agriculture Mechanisation and Irrigation Engineering Development Mr Ringson Chitsiko to issue a permit to import chickens from Brazil despite a government ban on such imports. Mujuru is alleged to have struck the deal when she went on official business to that country in 2011. These imports had the effect of killing the local chicken industry as they were done under the misrepresentation that they were donations to the army.

In all this Mujuru is portrayed as plotting the collapse of the poultry industry in order to portray the land reform as a failure. Furthermore by delivering some of the imported chickens to the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) she is accused of attempting to buy loyalty of the army in her regime change agenda.

In another story entitled *“VP Mujuru in another scandal: Businesswoman sold stolen car: Efforts to recover \$105 000 blocked (19/11/14)”* Mujuru is alleged to have used her influence and through the activities of her daughter Nyasha Mujuru, to sell a stolen car and opened a bank account using an unregistered National Deeds of Trust. Nyasha Mujuru is alleged to have used the name of her mother, VP Mujuru to prejudice a businesswoman from who she borrowed \$105 000 thereby using her office to aid in the corrupt activities by her family members.

The family name is also alleged to have been used in corrupt activities and to evade the administration of justice in an article *“Mujuru sucked in fatal accident scandal (26/11/14)”*.

In this story, Mujuru is accused of abusing her office to protect her daughter Chipu Mujuru–Makoni who was involved in a fatal accident that killed two people. The allegations are that Chipu Mujuru-Makoni did not have a driver’s licence and was whisked away from the scene of the accident by a security team on the instructions of Mujuru who was in Dubai at that time.

The story also states that while police noted Chipu Mujuru-Makoni as the driver and that Joice Mujuru was the owner of the vehicle that was involved in an accident but Mujuru-Makoni who did not have a licence at the time of the accident managed to produce a licence only two weeks later. This is suspected to have been expeditiously acquired through corrupt means to cover up the crime. A follow up by the police is alleged to have revealed that the name of the driver had also changed to Chipu Makoni and the vehicle ownership had been changed from Joice Mujuru to Government of Zimbabwe, all in a bid to clear the name of VP Mujuru.

In one of the stories; *“VP Mujuru in \$4m scandal, Customs duty evasion cited, Ex-company owner bares soul”* (29/11/14), Mujuru is alleged to have abused her office to allow relatives to import chickens without paying import duty. She is alleged to have used her position to order the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (Zimra) to release trucks full of chickens under the guise that it was a donation to the Zimbabwe Defence Industries (ZDI) but the chickens were later sold on the open market at low prices, which affected local farmers business viability. The story notes that Zimra demanded \$4 million tax from the former owner of the company as the new owners, who are Mujuru’s relatives, are untouchables. The story uses background information from other corruption stories on Mujuru such as the importation of chickens from Brazil and the reports on allegations of killing President Mugabe.

In another story entitled *“GMO+ scandal rocks food sector: VP Mujuru sucked in: Millions creamed off”* (02/11/14), the corrupt nature of Mujuru is further exposed. The story alleges that Mujuru, through the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) chief executive Mr Albert Mandizha, imported 52 000 tonnes of GMO+ maize from South Africa at a price of \$180 per tonne and resold it at \$390 per tonne thereby realising astronomical profits. The scandal was co-ordinated by an ally of Mujuru, Mr Ringson Chitsiko who acted without the knowledge of his superior - the minister of Agriculture Joseph Made.

The GMO+ maize was also alleged to have been sold to National Foods where another Mujuru ally Ray Kaukonde, referred to as a key funder of the plot to oust President Mugabe, has a stake. The maize is alleged to have been resold to food processing companies and unsuspecting individuals and the funds used for Mujuru’s political activities. A food processing company, Nestle, is alleged to have one of its cereal products test positive for GMOs, culminating in a row with National Foods.

The corrupt nature of Mujuru is further highlighted through the activities of her alleged allies and then Cabinet ministers such as Dzikamai Mavhaire and Munacho Mutezo who are accused of looting funds from government parastatals such as the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) to fund her factional activities. This is revealed in a story entitled *“Mutezo loots ZESA funds”* ( 2/12/14) in which the funds have been used to fund the ZANU PF Women’s League and abet VP Mujuru’s bid to oust President Mugabe. Furthermore, Mutezo is also held responsible for ordering Hwange Colliery Company at the time he was the Chairman to donate \$1 million, all of which was used to support VP Mujuru’s political programme in exchange for a ZANU PF politburo position.



In the story “*Mavhaire, Mutezo should be arrested- analysts*” (26/11/14), Mujuru is accused of corruptly using ZESA funds for factional activities at a time the country was facing acute power shortages. This behaviour is viewed as a sign that the Mujuru faction has “really spread its wings and this insensitivity on the part of VP Mujuru brings to question her intelligence and cruelty”. This description also echoes the simplicity and the cruel mother frames.

The story questions whether the use of ZESA funds for political activities shows that Mujuru is just dull or simply cruel- “Could this be dullness on her part or cruelty just like her name Teurai Ropa? She surely wants to bleed the majority to death”.

The editorial comment “*Congress, more than a Zanu PF event*” (3/12/14) sums up the corrupt framing of Mujuru by alleging that she has condoned corruption earlier when she condemned the media for exposing the Cashgate Scandal - where parastatals and local authority bosses were paid astronomical salaries while the entities were making losses and failing in terms of service delivery. In further construction of the frame, *The Herald* describes Mujuru as a criminal who should face jail; “*Mujuru faces jail: President....AS VP, Allies remain AWOL*” (5/12/14). In the two stories appearing on the same front page, Mujuru is portrayed as facing serious allegations of abusing office and should be prosecuted if the allegations are proved. The absence of Mujuru and her allies from the Zanu PF National People’s Congress is used as confirmation that they are thieves, corrupt and therefore guilty because “their absence is a confirmation that they are thieves who disappear without saying a word”.

*The Herald* uses the First Lady Grace Mugabe to bolster the corrupt nature of Mujuru as she is praised for unmasking her corrupt deals; “*Keep it up mother of revelations*” (10/12/14). Grace Mugabe gets praise for exposing “bad apples” like VP Mujuru described as “corrupt, two-faced personalities with dubious and grand evil plans”. The story also makes reference to the scandalous nature of Mujuru which involves \$1 million through deals with family shops, international travel shops and Kenyan and Indian investors who allegedly lost \$1 million in investment (19/11/14). Background information is also extensively utilised to show that by as early as the year 2000 a motion was moved to probe Mujuru for awarding a Chinese company a contract worth Z\$85 million when she was minister of water without following laid down procedures.

To further bolster the corrupt frame, a letter to the editor entitled - “*VP Mujuru keen to protect her corrupt empire*” (28/11/14) - paints a picture of an impatient Mujuru eager to topple President Mugabe in order to preserve her corrupt empire. This empire has been built by her

late husband while the party ZANU PF was fighting foreign machinations. In this letter, Mujuru is described as a person who never learns and is “foolish” to work with Western countries in planning to assassinate the president. The impatient nature of Mujuru is also depicted as a sign of not heeding wise counsel and a quote from Napoleon Bonaparte is employed to describe her impatience; “impatience is a great obstacle to success, he who treats everything with brusqueness gathers nothing, or only immature fruit which will never ripen”.

Analysis of information from a cross section of respondents shows that the framing of Joice Mujuru by *The Herald* as a simplistic thinker, corrupt and a cruel person was reflective of the character and behaviour of the government-controlled media in general and *The Herald* in particular. It was noted that the editorial thrust of *The Herald* follows what one respondent described as “the mood-swings in the ruling ZANU PF party” in that;

The newspaper was complicity in generating a false paper trail, which in the end acted as a charge sheet of an attempt to overthrow a sitting president by Joice Mujuru. In that regard, remember one of her arch rivals in the battle for the soul and survival of the political hurricane Jonathan Moyo, in charge of the Ministry of Information Media and Broadcasting Services during the whole process of besmirching her character and competences. *The Herald* seemed to have crossed the line of professional journalism and leaned on the intelligence plot to stampede Joice and her entire league of sympathizers out of government...In the end *The Herald* became heavily imbedded in the factional fights that it became an agenda item in the ruling party’s meetings, with the Joice Mujuru faction complaining bitterly about the behavior and character of the paper in general and that of its editor in particular, Caesar Zvayi. So the grand plan was to portray her as an incompetent leader who has no gravity to fill the shoes of the ‘creator’ and ensure that she won’t have enough political capital to launch outside the spheres of the party.(Interview 06/03/17).

Respondents also expressed the belief that the depiction of Joice Mujuru as an undesirable character began way before the final push from her political and government positions. Those agitating for her ouster sought to create an agenda that would legitimise that process in the eyes of the public. It was therefore necessary to present this character called Joice Mujuru as an incompetent and simplistic thinker and also a corrupt and cruel person so that when the grand plan to oust her came to pass, it would almost justify that action.(Interview 28/02/17)

Another disturbing aspect of the coverage of Mujuru by *The Herald*, especially regarding the corrupt frame, is the aspect of plagiarism in which the paper copied and pasted comments from one story to another which is an indicator that the authenticity of the sources is highly questionable. In the coverage of the corruption articles, *The Herald* plagiarised quotations of

sources from their previous stories which shows that the stories were of a fictitious nature since every story should have different voices who should give the relevant comments. Even if the same source would be consulted they would never say exactly the same statement word for word.

In the story “*VP Mujuru in another scandal: Business woman sold stolen car: Efforts to recover \$105 000*” (19/11/14), sensational allegations are made that Mujuru’s name has been used to deny a woman who had invested in a company owned by her daughter Nyasha Mujuru her return from the investment. The details of one Valentine Garacho and Tirivanhu Mudariki, who sold a car, are not clear on how they are related to the Mujuru family. The story does not tell the readers what happened to the car and jumps to use a source who was copied and pasted from another scandal story - “*Ex-NMB boss speaks on Mujuru account saga*” (20/11/14). It plagiarised the statement that;

A source close to the development said what raised concern was that the victim is an ordinary person and the perpetrators are people of major influence, the vice president’s daughter who used her mother’s name to get money and refuse to pay it back.

To bolster the claims of Mujuru as a corrupt and a power abuser, *The Herald* resorted to the use of an unidentified source which claimed that;

The case exposes the poverty of the VP claim in her advertisement in the *Daily News* that the allegations raised against her are malicious, false and hurtful. The reason why VP Mujuru’s post has become untenable is because many victims who over the years were silenced have become emboldened to come forward. There is a deluge and many of their claims do not even go back many years” said a source close to the developments.

In all this, *The Herald* news stories now border on outright lies and fabrications just to sensationalise the allegations with the use of plagiarised statements in a typical tabloid writing style.

#### **4.5 The false war legend frame**

In the false war legend frame, Joice Mujuru is described as an impostor riding on a stolen image of war heroics to catapult herself into various beneficial positions in the ZANU PF party and government. In this frame Mujuru is further denigrated for continuing to use the war name “Teurai Ropa” (spill blood) in a country enjoying relative peace and tranquillity and is depicted as blood thirsty person who wants to continue spilling blood as shown by allegations of trying to assassinate President Mugabe through her allies. To bring out this frame, the story “*VP Mujuru stole my picture: War veteran*” (2/12/14) will be analysed.



Left: Cde Linda Mangwende holds the poster with her portrait bearing Vice President Joice Mujuru's name in Harare yesterday; Above: From left, Cde Rynas Mutodi, Cde Basvi Kuda Chikasha, Cde Joshua Kativhu and Cde Linda Mangwende, known as Cde Sarudzai Nehanda, listen to Cde Tenzi Nehoreka (in gown) speaking in Harare yesterday

## VP Mujuru stole my picture: War veteran

Lloyd Gumbo  
Senior Reporter

VICE PRESIDENT Joice Mujuru and her hangers-on misled the country when they claimed that she downed a helicopter at the height of the liberation struggle as she was nowhere near Murehwa when the incident happened.

War veteran and a member of the National Traditional Inheritance Kingdom, Cde Linda Mangwende, whose Chimurenga name was Sarudzai

Nehanda, said VP Mujuru had been using her picture that was taken in 1978 to claim it was her after shooting down a helicopter.

War veteran and Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Christopher Mutsaers has already dismissed the VP's claims saying it was propaganda being peddled by political commissar Cde Webster Shamu to prop up VP Mujuru's bid to depose President Mugabe.

"VP Mujuru has been using my picture

claiming it is her after shooting down a helicopter, but the truth of the matter is that that is my picture that was taken in 1978 when I was coming from Takawira Sector entering Tangwena Sector in Gaza province," said Cde Mangwende in an interview with *The Herald* yesterday.

"I had left Cdes Kambanje (Tenzi Nehoreka) going to the sector where Cdes Aginyu Kambue (the late General Amoth Chimombe), Freddy Matanga, Brigadier General Munemo, Grenjar

Benhura, Tonderai Zimondi, Charles Munyoro and Tokwe were.

"On the women side, it was myself, Lieutenant Colonel Mukurazhiza, Cde Muchaneta Plaxedes, the late Colonel Mlambo and Mabel Chinomona. We are the ones who used to carry materials.

"The people responsible for shooting down the helicopter are Cdes Dick Joboringo, Kambanje pa D-level, Brian, Long Chase, Dangarembizi, Masweets, Gabarinocheke, Norest, Shungu and the

late Bazvoka Chidemo.

"These are the people who brought down the helicopter not these lies about Joice Mujuru because at the time she was at Osibisa Nehanda."

Cde Mangwende said she wanted VP Mujuru to pay her back all the money she gained for using her picture.

Cde Mangwende said the embattled VP must not claim to have downed the aircraft when she had not yet been trained.

Chief Nehoreka concurred with Cde Mangwende, saying VP Mujuru was nowhere near Murehwa when the helicopter was shot down.

"We don't understand why she wants to lie because she was not there when we brought down that helicopter."

"The picture that she is claiming to be her is of Cde Mangwende when she had just left us. Mujuru was not part of the team that downed the helicopter," he said.

Figure 7 (above)

### 4.5.1 Words and symbols

The headline of the story "*VP Mujuru stole my picture: War veteran*" (2/12/14) connotes that Mujuru is a thief who claims false glory. The story also points to the fact that this false glory is a result of manipulation by Mujuru and her allies who are described as *hangers on*. The story uses a big picture of the woman whose picture was allegedly stolen, holding the picture so that readers can make comparisons and another picture with some of the witnesses to prove beyond reasonable doubt the claim that she stole the picture. The false war heroics legend is portrayed as a scheme to prop up Mujuru's bid to depose the president. Mujuru's fame is thus a stolen one and she should compensate the rightful person for all the dues that accrued to her by using the picture.

### 4.5.2 Preferred meanings

The import of the story is to weaken any claims of Mujuru being a role model and heroine. To mobilise support for the dismissal, *The Herald* uses a picture which was allegedly manipulated by Mujuru and the story lists all the names of the people that were involved in the downing of a Rhodesian military helicopter during the war of liberation to show that Mujuru was nowhere near the site of the battle. A liberation War veteran from Murehwa District, Linda Mangwende, is presented as the unfortunate victim of Joice Mujuru's false claim to fame in that she is the one who downed a Rhodesian Air Force (RAF) helicopter during the war of liberation.

### 4.5.3 Omission analysis

This story makes a serious omission that in war, it is taboo to name who did what thereby implying that the whole exercise was an individual project. A war is fought by all for all and winning is by all and not by single-handed heroics. By trying to delineate who did what *The Herald* also failed to inform its readers on what Mujuru actually did after stripping her of the role in downing a plane.

Such a portrayal begs the question on what the accuser, Mutsvangwa, also did and what was the role of those who spent most of their time in prison and those who were leaders and did not hold guns. Also in trying to single out who did what, the whole war is reduced into a movie where everything is recorded so that individual roles can be analysed thereafter. The whole frame brings into question what was exactly transpiring during the war and whether all the tales about the war need to be revised.

Ultimately, the story "*VP Mujuru stole my picture: War Vet*" (02/12/14) casts doubts on many aspects of what happened in the war to the extent that audiences would doubt the Mujuru heroism because the story claims that when the plane was downed in Murehwa, Mujuru was not there and that she had not been trained as a fighter. This casts doubts on the actual role that Mujuru played in the war when the most heroic act is reduced to a hoax. This fits in well with other claims that she is an incapable leader who can use corrupt ways to acquire power.

#### 4.5.4 Limiting debate

The genesis of the story “*VP Mujuru stole my picture: War veteran*” (2/12/14) stems from allegations by Christopher Mutsvangwa who makes sensational claims that the legend that Mujuru downed a plane was a propaganda peddled by then ZANU PF political commissar Webster Shamu “to prop up VP Mujuru’s bid to depose President Mugabe”. Although the truth cannot be proven, it is clear that Mutsvangwa was at the centre of the negative framing of Mujuru and his intentions should be questioned as he was pushing for her ejection from the party and government in favour of another faction led by Mnangagwa, which he is widely believed to belong to. The intentions of bringing this issue at this time is also questionable as to why the party allowed the myth to be perpetuated in the first place.

There is also no evidence to the claims that Shamu was responsible for the printing of the picture and spreading the propaganda on Mujuru’s gallantry and as such *The Herald* seemed content on printing outlandish statements to push a factional agenda. To further complicate the matter, the elevation of Mujuru to the post of vice president was also supported by *The Herald* which now uses Mutsvangwa to disown Mujuru. This shows how that *The Herald* cannot be trusted as a medium for political communication because it is compromised by forces which disregard journalism ethics in nasty political fights. In addition, the story also makes use of tabloid techniques of using a bigger picture than the text (Bakkes 1999) in order to enable the reader to easily consume and believe the story thereby implying that readers are not intelligent enough to understand issues if pictures are not used.

Also the story “*President warns against rogue elements*” (11/12/14) portrays Mujuru as an undesirable person and ZANU PF members are warned against following her and her allies, who are described as rogue elements with hidden agendas whose hunger for power has led to efforts to subvert the ZANU PF party. Some of the rogue elements include the ministers who were fired from the government together with her. These included Didymus Mutasa (Presidential Affairs), Webster Shamu (Information, Technology, Postal and Courier Services), Francis Nhema (Youth Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment), Olivia Muchena (Higher and Tertiary Education Science and Technology), Dzikamai Mavhaire (Energy and Power Development) Nicholas Goche (Public Service and Social Welfare), Simbaneuta Mudarikwa (Minister of State for Mashonaland East Province) and Munacho Mutezo (Deputy Minister of Energy and Power Development).

In consistent and systematic fashion in *The Herald*, stories about Mujuru always ended up with emphasis on the fact that she is a corrupt person who abused her office as vice president, demanded 10% shareholding from many companies and was involved in illicit deals in diamonds, attempting to defeat the course of justice, extorting investors, undermining the authority of the president and seeking to depose him through unconstitutional means and hatching plans to assassinate him.

In the fake war legend frame, the claims of downing an aeroplane are also played down by the demeaning of the Mujuru's war name '*Teurai Ropa*' which means in Shona "Spill the blood". *The Herald* employs a former editor of the *Chronicle* and *The Daily News*, Geoffrey Nyarota, to critique the continued use of the nom de guerre after the war has ended in a story entitled "*Joice Mujuru and the spilling of blood*" (14/09/15). Furthermore the name is described as being discordant even among battle-hardened war veterans and gruesome especially for a female fighter.

Nyarota also ridicules the claims that Mujuru downed a plane while emphasising the inappropriateness of the name "Teurai Ropa" because "an average Zimbabwean trembles at the casual exhortation to the wholesale slaughter of fellow human beings that is implicit in the name Teurai Ropa". In this frame Mujuru has ulterior motives by maintaining the name and she is thus a dangerous person due to the fact that precious and innocent blood was spilled during the war, something people do not need to be reminded of anymore.

A person who maintains such a name does is not fit to become the president of a country as Nyarota argues;

It is typically insensitive for an aspiring president to retain such a name as "spill the blood" in the peaceful environment that envelops Zimbabwe today as a prelude to launching a campaign to occupy the highest office in the land. (14/09/15).

Nyarota links the name Teurai Ropa to the alleged plans to assassinate President Mugabe when he asks the question "Which people's blood does the leader of People First want to continue to be spilled anyway?"

Mujuru is thus depicted as someone who is trapped in the past and wishes to continue spilling blood, something that was appropriate during the war in the 1970s. The spilling of blood in the current context is described as only for the cold-hearted and the country does not need any constant reminders of such horrendous experiences. The spilling of blood is considered inappropriate especially when the call for the spilling of blood is coming from a woman

aspiring to be the president; “For a woman aspiring to be our president, the name Teurai Ropa has simply become particularly inappropriate and highly insensitive”.

In the false war legend frame, Mujuru is a person who has built her history on false pretences of downing an aeroplane and is a greedy and power-hungry individual who still wants to spill more blood and thus is undesirable for the office of the president. This framing builds on the other frames to portray the devious nature of Mujuru, especially corruption and plotting to assassinate the president and takeover power.

The false war legend of Mujuru is also depicted in a cartoon which tries to link her with Morgan Tsvangirai, who is depicted as a front of the Western countries. The cartoon (11/12/14) shows Tsvangirai and Mujuru both wearing T-shirts with the messages “Mugabe must Go by any means” putting on caps with Tsvangirai holding a placard written “I was once handsome” while Mujuru’s says “I once downed a chopper”. The effect is to frame Mujuru as a devious character, the same tag that Tsvangirai has been labelled with over the years. This frame is linked with the regime change agent frame.

Analysis of respondents’ statements revealed that the fake war legend frame was the best way to discredit Mujuru by belittling her war record because the myth of the shooting down of the helicopter had been promoted to portray her as a mythical guerrilla. This was supposed to stand her in good stead to rise in national politics but when she began to present a challenge to the powers that be this myth had to be quickly debunked. The bigger picture, as respondents noted, is that Joyce Mujuru herself never made the claims that she shot down the plane. It was always other voices agitating on her behalf that she did so.

The creation of that myth in the first place was attributed to a long-term strategy to prop up a strong woman candidate whose prowess would appeal later, considering her proximity by marriage to another ZANU PF and influential military person, the late Solomon Mujuru. In addition, respondents noted that while Mujuru was in ZANU PF, the myth served to put the party in good light. It saved the hegemonic purpose of portraying the party as the best thing that ever happened to Zimbabwe by liberating the country from the colonialists and legitimise her as qualified to be vice-president. However, respondents believe that legitimacy was only limited to serving President Robert Mugabe’s interests. There was consensus by respondents that no one knows the truth about this helicopter (22/02/17) with one ZANU PF activist also



expressing doubts over the authenticity of the downing of the Rhodesian Air Force helicopter by revealing that;

I attended a think-tank meeting of Australians in 2007 where some Rhodesians there strongly disputed the authenticity of this claim, saying it was just part of the propaganda machinery from ZANLA. She could have floored the chopper, and those saying she did not might just be after discrediting her, but it is not an outside possibility that she could have just been a beneficiary of a long-lasting myth sustained to give an image of gallantry to ZANLA forces. She did not do much to claim responsibility for the said act of heroism, and that makes it even more difficult to make a conclusion on what exactly transpired. (*Interview 22/02/17*)

Through these myths, respondents believe that the ruling ZANU PF party has always survived on creating myths and legends as part of perpetuating its rule. This comes from an interview in which a former newspaper editor says;

The war of liberation is the biggest of such myths and legends, replete with exaggerations and narratives of exploits of ZANU PF cadres. We don't get to hear much of what other liberation movements such as ZAPU and ZIPRA did which is an undermining of their role and an elevation of the contribution of ZANU PF and ZANLA. The downing of the helicopter by Mujuru is one such narrative used when it mattered to elevate her and of course used when it mattered to undermine her authority and heroism. History is therefore what ZANU PF says at any given time for the purposes of what that narrative must serve. (*Interview 24/02/17*)

The effect of the framing is to simply show that if you are in ZANU PF you are glorified and if you unceremoniously leave it you will be vilified. The simple fact is that one will be a hero only in ZANU PF and a sell-out out of the party (*Interview 19/02/17*).

#### **4.6 Regime change agent frame**

The regime change agent frame depicts Mujuru as a regime change agent who fronts elements that have always been accused of seeking to remove the ZANU PF government regime, emanating from liberation war especially the MDC at the behest of western powers such as Britain and the United States of America and the European Union. Mujuru is also depicted as seeking to effect regime change by assassinating President Mugabe working with her allies. The story "*Mujuru faction courts MDC-T, Parties discuss merger modalities, Mujuru tipped for presidency, Tsvangirai PM*" (20/11/14) below brings to the fore this framing.



# Mujuru faction courts MDC-T

• Parties discuss merger modalities • Mujuru tipped for presidency, Tsvangirai PM

Herald Reporters

REPRESENTATIVES of the faction led by Vice President Dr Joice Mujuru and MDC-T member Mr Job Sikhala met in Harare last week to discuss modalities of joining forces ahead of election 2018, further confirming widespread reports that the VP and her cabal were the "moderates" that Mr Morgan Tsvangirai said he had been working with pursuant to his abortive "new Zimbabwe".

A meeting was held in Harare last Friday between some members of the Mujuru camp that has been working to unconstitutionally unseat President Mugabe, and Mr Sikhala to discuss preparations of a likely merger between MDC-T and the Mujuru faction.

The parties proposed making VP Mujuru president and Mr Tsvangirai the deputy or alternatively prime minister just like the arrangement in Russia between President Vladimir Putin and premier Dmitry Medvedev.

The parties also said Simba Makoni should be part of the arrangement as he was close to both VP Mujuru and Mr Tsvangirai.

The First Lady Amai Grace Mugabe recently revealed that the launch of both Mavambo/Kusile/Dawn and the MDC was mooted in VP Mujuru's house.

At the meeting, Mr Sikhala revealed that he planned to launch a frivolous Constitutional application quoting the First Lady's statements calling for the resignation of VP Mujuru as evidence that President Mugabe was no longer running the country as decisions were being made by his wife.

"Job (Sikhala) said he knew his application will not go anywhere, but was just a ploy to draw public and media attention and also shape the politics of the country," said a source close to developments.

Mr Sikhala said he wanted the prevailing political situation in ZANU-PF to remain as the party's congress drew nearer.

"Sikhala said he wants VP Mujuru to be first and Tsvangirai second or else Mujuru can be president and Tsvangirai PM just like the Russian scenario of Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev," said the source.

"Sikhala said Cde Mnangagwa has taken over, but it will be difficult for him to gain support in Manicaland, Dotito and Matabeleland. Sikhala said he will check on all early 80s Herald papers that quoted Cde Mnangagwa wanting to ensure people in Matabeleland are killed (fumigated). He said he will use



Dr Mujuru

## ... under fire VP brews a shocker

Herald Reporter

VICE President Dr Joice Mujuru yesterday clandestinely filed papers to contest her current position at the forthcoming 6th Annual National People's Congress, a development that was described as not only unprocedural, but also unprecedented in the history of the party.

The unprecedented move raised eyebrows in that it came at a time of a growing cacophony for Dr Mujuru's resignation from her position in the party and Government in the wake of shocking allegations of corruption and abuse of office

levelled against her.

The First Lady Amai Grace Mugabe led calls for the VP's resignation and the calls have since been endorsed by war veterans, students and the Women's League, some of whose members have threatened to march on Munhumutapa to carry Dr Mujuru out if she doesn't step down.

More so, the unprocedural application was unlikely to have been made out of ignorance given that Dr Mujuru has spent 10 years as VP and has been through two congresses and as such knows that the

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the information against Cde Mnangagwa so that he does not ascend to be president," said the source.

The source said Mr Sikhala discussed the role

of ZANU-PF political commissar Cde Webster Shamu whom he said impregnated a 15-year-old girl, one Tapiwa Sithole, currently studying at a university in the UK saying the case could

see him arrested.

"Job also consulted on what was likely to happen within the security services," said the source. "Discussions evolved around who would take over the President's Department. He revealed that an army officer will take over, though name not known."

"He also enquired on which camps were General officers like Air Marshall Perrance Shiri, Commissioner-General Paradzai Zimondi, Commissioner-General Augustine Chihuri and Lieutenant General Phillip Valerio Sibanda."

The revelations came as Mr Tsvangirai yesterday threw his weight behind VP Mujuru and accused the First Lady Amai Grace Mugabe of seeking to assume leadership of the country in her place.

Mr Tsvangirai spoke as the full opposition arsenal comprising quasi-political NGOs, private newspapers and websites have gone into overdrive defending VP Mujuru while castigating Amai Mugabe for exposing the shady dealings that have made Dr Mujuru's continued vice presidency quite untenable.

Mr Tsvangirai said the First Lady would never succeed in whatever she was doing, the same language being used by VP Mujuru's allies who are seeking to oust President Mugabe using all means, including forming alliances with opposition parties.

Analysts have questioned why Mr Tsvangirai was optimistic that the First Lady would fail in wiping out corrupt elements in ZANU-PF if he was not in alliance with those accused of corrupt tendencies like VP Mujuru. In any case, the analysts said, ZANU-PF's internal fights had nothing to do with Mr Tsvangirai and Amai Mugabe never said she wanted to take over leadership of the country and ZANU-PF.

VP Mujuru has been leading a faction accused of planning to depose President Mugabe and recently a plot to assassinate the Head of State by her allies was exposed leading to the suspension of ZANU-PF national spokesperson Rugare Gumbo.

Amai Mugabe has been vocal in denouncing the nefarious plans by VP Mujuru's camp, exposing a number of corrupt activities allegedly undertaken by the VP.

VP Mujuru has roundly been condemned in ZANU-PF, but has won surprising sympathy from opposition parties, NGOs and the private media, where she is believed

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**Figure 8**

### **4.6.1 Words and symbols**

The headline "*Mujuru faction courts MDC-T, Parties discuss merger modalities, Mujuru tipped for presidency, Tsvangirai PM*" (20/11/14) suggests to the readers that Mujuru has a structured faction operating inside ZANU PF. Also this faction is also strategising with the MDC-T which since its formation in 1999 has always been described as an enemy and stooge of the West bent on regime change. The headline sought to confirm that indeed Mujuru leads a faction and engaged in factional politics. The accusation of trying to effect regime change is established by the statement which spells the discussions on;

. . . modalities of joining forces ahead of the election 2018, further confirming widespread reports that the VP and her cabal were the "moderates" that Mr Morgan Tsvangirai said he had been working with pursuant to his abortive "new Zimbabwe".

From the above quote it is clear that Mujuru is leading a cabal – (a group of people who are involved in secret plans to get political power) who would join with MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai who stands accused of fronting a regime change to bring a "new Zimbabwe".

The implied merger of these political parties, including Simba Makoni's Mavambo/Kusile/Dawn which the First Lady alleges were formed in VP Mujuru's house, is meant to confirm that she is an agent of regime change. Furthermore the fact that Tsvangirai defended Mujuru from attacks by the First Lady is given as proof that they were working together to remove the President and share the spoils which is further emphasised by the kickers to the headline "*Parties discuss merger modalities... Mujuru tipped for presidency, Tsvangirai PM*".

#### **4.6.2 Preferred meanings**

The story "*Mujuru faction courts MDC-T, Parties discuss merger modalities, Mujuru tipped for presidency, Tsvangirai PM*" (20/11/14) seeks to highlight the fact that Mujuru is seeking regime change in the country by working with opposition parties to oust the President and forming a coalition in which she will either be the president with the MDC-T leader being the Prime Minister or vice versa. To hammer this point the Russian example is given. Another aspect that is meant to show that Mujuru is fronting regime change agents is the depiction of Tsvangirai as leading what is described as;

... full opposition arsenal comprising of quasi-political NGOs, private newspaper and websites (which) have gone into an overdrive defending VP Mujuru while castigating Amai Mugabe for exposing shady deals that have made Dr Mujuru's continued vice presidency quite untenable. It therefore follows that Tsvangirai was using the same language used by VP Mujuru's allies seeking to oust President Mugabe by all means, including forming alliances with opposition parties.

From the above quote, Mujuru is thus behaving in a way that makes her unfit for her post and must therefore resign. This is linked with other stories such as "*Step down, war vet tell Mujuru*" (17/11/14). The net effect of the story is to depict Mujuru as a sell-out or devious person who is seeking to change the regime and who should be rejected and ejected from ZANU PF and the government.

#### **4.6.3 Omission analysis**

Although the story "*Mujuru faction courts MDC-T, Parties discuss merger modalities, Mujuru tipped for presidency, Tsvangirai PM*" (20/11/14) describes Mujuru as heading a faction, it does not tell the audience of the existence of other factions and their leaders. In so doing *The Herald* sees everything wrong with her having a faction and nothing wrong with others leading some factions. The story also fails to explain why a sitting vice president could make such

alliances with opposition political parties without the state security apparatus being aware of such activities. Also there are no details as to who other factional representatives, except the representative of MDC-T, who is identified as Job Sikhala. Furthermore, Sikhala is a recent returnee to the MDC party and the logic of him being a representative in such talks is quite questionable as he does not hold a senior post in the MDC.

To cast further doubt on the authenticity of the story, Sikhala's voice is not heard in the story and everything is just mere speculation. What is also suspicious is the fact that the names of the writers of the story are not mentioned. While it is not unusual for some stories not to have by-lines, a story of this magnitude should be clear that it is not a fabrication by showing who wrote the story. It is possible that this could be a story planted in the paper by external forces, which confirms some of the allegations raised of stories being planted from outside the newsroom (IMPI report 2013). It is thus possible that a rival faction could have hijacked the paper to eliminate a rival (Mujuru) and position itself to take over from the president.

Also in trying to criticise Tsvangirai for what *The Herald* describes as an attack on the First Lady quest to take power in the same way as Mao's wife in China tried to take the leadership of the Communist Party and Mama Cecilia Kadzamira in Malawi in the time of Kamuzu Banda as a sign of history repeating itself, *The Herald* fails to note that what was taking place was pointing in that direction. By trying to use this as an attack *The Herald* actually emphasised the point that the First Lady was trying to do the same thing done by Mao's wife and Cecilia Kadzamira albeit in an effort to defend the status quo. This brings to the fore the uncritical and unquestioning philosophy and blind hero-worshipping at *The Herald* in support of a political ally and disparaging of a rival.

#### **4.6.4 Limiting debate**

This story "*Mujuru faction courts MDC-T, Parties discuss merger modalities, Mujuru tipped for presidency, Tsvangirai PM*" (20/11/14) is typical tabloid article written by anonymous people using anonymous sources. It is a fictitious piece of information patched up together from unknown sources. The details of the meeting between Sikhala and representatives of VP Mujuru's faction are also not made public. The story makes speculative reports of attempts by Sikhala to launch what is described as a;

. . . frivolous constitutional application, quoting the First Lady statement calling for the resignation of the Vice President as evidence that President Mugabe was no longer running the country as decisions were being made by his wife.

These allegations are based on mere speculation, a characteristic of tabloid newspapers which do not verify facts (Bird 1999, Sparks 2000). All the allegations of either Tsvangirai or Mujuru making an arrangement similar to that of Russia are derived from unnamed sources thereby creating sensation as such information does not create an enlightened citizenry. In typical tabloid format, *The Herald* just adds information about Webster Shamu having impregnated a 15-year-old-girl studying in the UK. The inclusion of this information adds nothing to the story which is talking about Mujuru courting the MDC-T. This is just exciting information which does not add any value and is just inserted for reasons that are not clear. When one reads the story, they are left confused in terms of its organisation. Furthermore, the story makes sensational claims that Mujuru owns 10 percent shares in private media houses, without presenting the evidence to that effect.

The depiction of Mujuru as a traitor to the ZANU PF party and by default of the ideals of the Zimbabwean liberation struggle makes her part of the western countries-inspired regime change agenda of toppling the ZANU PF party from power. The charge of wanting to effect regime change has been extensively applied on the opposition political party – the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) which has been accused of being a front for former white farmers and western countries' interests, especially Britain, the European Union (EU) and the United States of America (USA).

The failure by MDC to successfully win elections since it was formed is blamed on championing western agendas against the ideals of the liberation struggle. MDC is considered a puppet party led by people with no war credentials such as Morgan Tsvangirai who is continuously taunted for deserting the war. In Mujuru, the western governments who have always wanted to effect regime change are said to have found a good ally, a reformist or moderate character or the replica of the Chinese reformist Deng Xiaoping in Zimbabwean politics who could lead the reform of ZANU PF from within.

The framing of Mujuru as a regime change agent is created by linking her and her allies to the MDC-T. One of Mujuru's allies, Nicholas Goche, is linked to the MDC-T and accused of working with it MDC-T in Mashonaland Central Province to ensure that it wins elections, prolong the life of the Government of National Unity (GNU) and misleading people that MDC-T and ZANU PF had merged to form a single party. He is also accused of pleading with people in Mashonaland Central to treat MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai as one of their leaders.

Other charges were that Nicholas Goche and his allies were plotting to unseat the president and replace him with Joice Mujuru.

Furthermore, Mujuru is portrayed as person who always worked with elements opposed to President Mugabe in an editorial “*So near yet so far for Mujuru*” (01/12/14). She was so near the president for 10 years but she failed to be a good understudy. Instead she spent all the time plotting to “dispense him at all costs stopping at nothing even assassination”. In this frame Mujuru is a Machiavellian character who always dined with the enemies of the party. This concurs with the framing of Mujuru as having aided in the formation of MDC and Mavambo Kusile Dawn (MKD) and the allegations that these parties were formed in her house as alleged by the First Lady Grace Mugabe.

Respondents noted a consistent trend by ZANU PF since the turn of the century which portrayed the West, particularly Britain and the United States of America as the worst enemies of Zimbabwe’s sovereignty by sponsoring a regime change agenda. The regime change agenda became a potent tool in the ruling party’s propaganda arsenal and anyone perceived to be linked to the regime-change agenda automatically became an enemy of the state. Dissenting voices in the civil society and opposition politicians such as Morgan Tsvangirai have been described as regime-change puppets of the West, incompetent, sex-mongering womanisers among other pejorative labels. The same label was used on Mujuru so that ZANU PF supporters would completely distance themselves from her. According to one respondent, in framing Mujuru as a regime change agent *The Herald* was;

Speaking for its masters who control the newspaper from Munhumutapa Building. The use of regime change is associated with being a stooge and lacking patriotism and a convenient and historical description of all those opposed to ZANU PF or who have to be chucked out of ZANU PF. So Joice Mujuru had to be associated with the West to be easily kicked out. According to ZANU PF, if you are a regime agent in Zimbabwe it means you are unpatriotic and against the interests of Zimbabwe, that makes it easy for the party and state agents to attack you. (*Interview 24/03/17*).

The regime change frame thus was a ploy to cripple all her political ambitions and *The Herald* was used as the conduit of discrediting any political foe. It was excessively used to obliterate the public’s sympathy in Mujuru. The overall intention was intended to achieve failure in her ambitions to become a formidable force to reckon with on the opposition’s political arena (*Interview 25/02/17*). The characterisation of Mujuru as a regime change agent was thus intended to amplify the negative narrative which has always accompanied enemies of the

regime (*Interview 18/02/17*). However, one ZANU PF official questioned *The Herald's* construction of the regime change agent frame arguing that seeking to remove a regime is perfectly legal since it is the reason why politicians form political parties to seek political office. He stated;

I am sure by forming Zim-PF Dr Mujuru is after regime change in Zimbabwe and that is perfectly constitutional and legal. However, the allegation that she has joined puppet politics in search of Western donor funding are what we may need to interrogate. At the split of Zim-PF Munacho Mutezo accused Dr Mujuru of getting \$20 000 in donations from her trip to the West, among other places. This is not the kind of money that puppet politicians receive from Western governments, and as such it remains totally unsubstantiated that she has reduced herself to a Western puppet, or a regime change agent. (*Interview 22/02/17*).

Through such assertions, respondents seem to be dismissive of the regime change framing by *The Herald* in trying to proffer a singular grand narrative on what constitutes regime change and also trying to criminalise it. The continuous application of such framing on perceived opponents of ZANU PF seems to be fast becoming a tired ploy whose construction is being challenged.

#### 4.7 Greedy and cruel stepmother frame

In this frame Mujuru is described by *The Herald* as a cruel and greedy stepmother who is bent on denying the rightful beneficiaries of the estate of her late husband, especially the children sired by her husband Solomon Mujuru and several other women. She is accused by both Solomon Mujuru's business partners and children of not registering the estate four years since his death. This frame is made clearer by analysing the story "*Mujuru estate in limbo*" 17/11/14.





**Figure 9**

### **4.7.1 Words and symbols**

The story “*Mujuru estate in limbo*” (17/11/14) blames Mujuru for delaying in the registration of the estate of her late husband, an act which is prejudicial to the surviving children sired by Solomon Mujuru with other women and his business associates since the year 2010. These children are mentioned by name as Tendai and Tsitsi who are staying in London and reported to be struggling to survive. The story is based on a letter by the lawyers representing both the business associates and the children to the Master of High Court seeking to establish the status of the estate. From the story, the position of the estate is not made clear by the Master of High Court who refused to comment but according to what are described as *investigations by The Herald*, the estate has not been registered. The use of the word “limbo” in the headline is also meant to lay the blame on Mujuru for not registering the estate and the resultant negative effects on the children.

### **4.7.2 Preferred meanings**

The story “*Mujuru estate in limbo*” (17/11/14) seeks to show that Mujuru is insensitive, acts unlawfully and is greedy in failing to register the will thereby being prejudicial to the interests of the children and the economy which should benefit from taxes. The basic import of the story is that Mujuru is not a law-abiding citizen in line with other frames by *The Herald* which depict her as a corrupt person through abuse of her position as the vice president. To give effect to the fact that Solomon Mujuru had children outside marriage *The Herald* describes him as a “skirt chaser” and that Joice is demanding DNA tests for all those who are claiming to be her children is a sign that she is delaying the registration of the estate because she is a cruel stepmother.

### **4.7.3 Omission analysis**

The story “*Mujuru estate in limbo*” (17/11/14) fails to reveal why the issue that the estate has not been registered has not been raised earlier before Joice Mujuru fell out of favour with ZANU PF. Another aspect omitted is whether it is the only wealthy estate in the country that has not been registered. It seems the issue of the estate is being amplified in line with other negative frames by *The Herald* to discredit Mujuru who has fallen out of favour and is being pushed out by a rival faction in the party. *The Herald* also deliberately ignores the fact that there is nothing wrong with requiring DNA tests for those claiming to be Solomon Mujuru’s children if there are disputes over their status. Another aspect that is sidelined by *The Herald*

in this frame is that the story lacks authenticity as the ultimate authority to authoritatively comment on the issue – Master of High Court refused to comment and in true tabloid style *The Herald* went ahead to publish an unconfirmed story basing on what it called “investigations”.

The question that can be asked is, who was *The Herald* source of the information to authenticate the story if the Master of High Court refused to comment unless these are mere fabrications? Such kind of writing points to an orchestration to discredit a political foe by the invisible forces that were dictating the editorial direction at the newspaper.

The story “*Mujuru estate in limbo*” (17/11/14) also does not tell the readers whether Joice Mujuru is the only person who is mandated to register the estate neither does it tell where the Will is kept and thus leaves readers to imagine that she has the Will and nothing can be done to have it registered. The story also creates the impression that the registration of the estate depends on what Joice Mujuru feels regardless of the lawful position. By virtue of the fact that Mujuru was the surviving spouse it means she can register the estate but the law does not bar intended beneficiaries from doing so, thus making the focus on Mujuru as the stumbling block to be viewed as nothing else but sinister. Also the story does not provide the response from the Master of the High Court on the letter written by the children and his business associates in 2013 but merely reports that the estate has not been registered.

It is also doubtful that a senior court reporter would proceed to write such an unbalanced story whose chief source had refused to comment on whether the estate had been registered or not. Such kind of stories are not characteristic of quality journalism standards but gravitate towards the half-truths found in tabloids (Gripsrud 1992).

#### **4.7.4 Limiting debate**

The story is a good example of what may be described as fiction devoid of comment from the authentic sources and buttressed by fictitious lawyers who make unfounded claims that the failure to register the estate will have a negative effect on the performance of the economy in terms of revenue collection. These sentiments then imply that if the estate is registered then the performance of the economy will be enhanced, which is a very simplistic form of thinking, especially coming from a lawyer.

Also the revelations by another anonymous lawyer that the practice of not registering estates is widespread due to the lack of a provision for penalising those who do not comply exonerates

Mujuru and could indicate that the singling out of her case can be part of a bigger and sinister plot by wielders of editorial powers at *The Herald* to tarnish her image.

The cruel stepmother frame is further highlighted in the other stories “*VP Mujuru rapped*” (28/11/14), “*General Mujuru’s children wallow in poverty*” (23/08/16) which portray Mujuru’s cruelty and character as an unmotherly hero. This is shown in the allegations of her failure to show remorse and pay her condolences to the two families which lost their loved ones in a road accident involving her daughter Chipso Makoni.

In terms of the African tradition, Mujuru is described as someone without people at heart. She does not bother to go and pay condolences to the family of the victims. This character is described as something not unusual but what she has always been but hitherto unknown to the public in that “She has always been like (heartless and cruel) that even during the liberation struggle. She is not concerned about people. She is not responsible” (28/11/14).

Also the children of the late General Mujuru wallowed in poverty because of her refusal to register the estate and frustrating its administration because of the “heartless, uncaring, cruelty and unmotherly character of Mujuru” who is referred in the article as the leader of Zimbabwe People First (ZPF); “*General Mujuru’s children wallow in poverty*” (23/08/16). The fact that she does not care has thus led to the;

Children of the late General Solomon Mujuru are wallowing in poverty amid revelations that Dr Joice Mujuru and surviving spouse and the leader of the Zimbabwe People First is allegedly frustrating the execution of the late national hero’s estate which is believed to run into millions of dollars.

As a leader of a political party which claims to put people first, the article questions how a person who fails to take care of their husband’s children will successfully lead a country, which is even direr for someone claiming the title “Mother Zimbabwe”. This framing is meant to warn the people of the dangers of such characters like Mujuru presiding over national institutions or even leading a party or a government because she is heartless, greedy and cruel. African mothers are not expected to exhibit such a character.

Mujuru’s corrupt frame is also reinforced and linked with reports that she doctored the Will of General Mujuru in order to deny other beneficiaries as a sign of her greediness and dishonest nature. The doctoring of the Will is described as one of the explanations why she kept it for four years when it is supposed to be within the courts within 14 days. This description again invokes connotations of criminality and deceit.

A letter to the editor, “*Mujuru must come out clean on will*” (6/4/15), aptly describes the unmotherly nature of Mujuru through sensational allegations that;

She is unmotherly, she evicted one of General Mujuru’s sons Tendai who was staying with her since he was three (3) years old as a way of preventing him from getting a share of his father’s estate (6/4/15).

These allegations thus buttress other corruption allegations in that if she is capable of altering her husband’s Will how can she fail to corruptly own 10% equity in many companies including diamond mines? The letter reveals that Dr Mujuru is so gluttonous to the extent that allegations that she and her cabal are planning to unconstitutionally oust President Mugabe from office was just a tip of the iceberg.

#### **4.8 Implications of *The Herald* framing of Joice Mujuru**

Content analysis findings and respondents’ views show that *The Herald* employed tabloid reporting styles such as subjectivity, sensationalism, use of large photographs, manipulation, use of of fictitious and low credibility sources, publishing of falsehoods, cheapness, vulgarity, exaggeration, trivialisation, simplification, printing of unconfirmed gossip and outlandish claims and personification in its coverage of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from Zanu PF. All these attributes point towards the damaging process of tabloidisation as defined by (Esser 1999, Bird 2000, Kurtz 1993, Turner 2004, Kalb 1997 and Bakkes 1999).

Findings from the content analysis of the selected articles show that *The Herald* is undergoing a process of tabloidisation and drifting away from the expectations of a serious broadsheet journalism newspaper by embracing tabloid journalism styles in its articles. The adoption of tabloid journalism techniques by broadsheet newspapers is considered to be a contamination which is associated with the decline of journalism standards (Bek2004, Conboy 2005, and Glyn 2000). The confusion of broadsheet and tabloid subjects is associated with fears that broadsheet and tabloid journalism will become indistinguishable, resulting in dumping down or tablodisation (McNair 1999). Such characterisation seems to be the case in *The Herald’s* coverage of the Joice Mujuru issue.

All the selected articles were at variance with the principles of objectivity, a key legitimating factor in journalistic professional ethics. Professional detachment and objectivity are the primary means by which journalists attempt to achieve credibility and authority (Schudson 1990). Also objectivity is a critical guarantee of quality control, which makes audiences believe what is coming from the press is believable. This claim of objectivity is one of the critical

factors in building trust even in situations where the facts about an event may not be known. In addition, objectivity embodies a neutral attitude in the collection, processing and dissemination of information and the presumption is that there are no ulterior motives or concealed service to a third party (Tuchman 1972, Lichtenberg 1991). Due to the importance of the concept of objectivity, broadsheet journalism newspaper articles must be logical, undistorted by emotion or manipulation and dedicated to uncover demonstrable truths (McQuail 2013).

#### **4.8.1 Emotionally-appealing language and extensive descriptions**

*The Herald* also used emotionally-appealing language in some of its descriptions of Mujuru and her perceived allies such as Webster Shamu who at the 6<sup>th</sup> ZANU PF National People's Congress is shown in a picture captioned "The forlorn figure of Webster Shamu at the bottom of the dais, summed up the fate of the man who was found in the Mujuru basket (08/12/14). Shamu is described as someone who;

". . . was supposed to take in the mocking eyes of thousands of people in the congress venue, his own eyes red, with their traditional heavy bags and sad and mere chinks within sagging skin on his long face. Boy oh boy that was so poignant" (08/12/14).

Such extensive descriptions sum up the extent to which *The Herald* went overboard to include exciting and "entertaining" language in a typical tabloid journalism style. The sensational approach which *The Herald* employed was also evident in the privately-owned press where President Mugabe was reacting to a story implying that he was afraid of VP Mujuru. President Mugabe complained about the sensational, dramatic and attention-getting headlines describing it as an abuse of journalistic privilege. He accused the privately-owned newspapers of sensationalisation of issues to lure people to buy their publications. He complained that;

You are thinking everyday how you can excite people who read so that they can buy your paper. "*President speaks on ex VP Mujuru, Slates media fabrications, Calls for responsible journalism*" (16/09/15)

The complaint is a pointer that news stories in broadsheet journalism newspapers now included some elements of drama and sensation in order to attract readers, a typical tabloid technique of exaggerating issues to attract audiences (Bakkes 1999, Kurtz 1996).

#### **4.8.2 Editorialising of news stories.**

One feature of tabloids is the mixing of facts and opinion stories which is unlike quality broadsheet newspapers which must clearly separate facts from opinion in news stories

(Franklin 1997). In the story “*President calls for self-belief, emulate national heroes, none but ourselves can do it for Zimbabwe*” (08/12/14), *The Herald* resorts to editorialising by attributing the remarks by the president to Mujuru although he did not mention her by name. *The Herald* states;

Remarks appeared aimed at embattled VP Mujuru and her cabal who were reported to have been working with the MDC and some hostile Western nations for what they called a post Mugabe era.

This information is not attributed to a source, it is opinion just added in a news story, a practice which is permissible in feature articles. Attribution removes the suspicion that a writer is merely parroting their own opinion as fact it will show that the writer is an impartial observer in the writing of news stories. Also, in the story “*Cabinet to sit tomorrow*” (8/12/14) opinion was inserted in the story from a statement from the Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet, Misheck Sibanda. *The Herald* inserted the statement that;

The cabinet meeting comes at time some senior government officials including VP Mujuru are in trouble for plotting to unseat President Mugabe. It will be interesting to see if Dr Mujuru will attend the cabinet meeting considering that she has been boycotting some high-level ZANU PF meetings, including the party’s just ended 6<sup>th</sup> National People’s Congress.

Again the information is not attributed to any source. It is opinion inserted in a hard news story, which makes the story subjective and unbalanced. Also *The Herald* neither made any attempts to seek comment from Mujuru nor stating that they made an effort to reach her but relied on other media houses such as Studio 7(10/12/14) as the basis for their stories.

#### **4.8.3 Printing of unconfirmed gossip and outlandish claims**

Some of the stories on Mujuru relied on gossip and publishing outlandish claims in the manner of tabloid journalism (Kurtz 1996, Bird 1992, Sparks 2000). In the story, “*Sekeramayi, Parirenyatwa survive*” 10/12/14), *The Herald* published unconfirmed gossip that Kaukonde abused women, funded factional activities in Mashonaland East province and had skipped the border. *The Herald* made extensive use of rumour, hearsay and gossip just like tabloids, for example, in the story “*Step down, War vets tell Mujuru*” (17/11/14). In the story Rugare Gumbo is alleged to have been recorded making the assassination talk with claims that a report was made to the party authorities of Mutasa saying “Mugabe will be shot”. This report is linked to the claims that a senior Mujuru ally and a cabinet minister in Mashonaland Central (Nicholas

Goche) made contingencies for such scenarios during recent meetings with potential hit-men in South Africa and Israel.

*The Herald* also relied heavily on gossip through the prevalent use of such statements as “last week’s extraordinary politburo meeting heard that sometime in October Mutasa boasted to one of his lovers that if President Mugabe blocks the ascendancy of VP Mujuru the president will be shot”. *The Herald* made such outlandish claims based on rumours and thereby gravitating in the world of make believe. Such revelations of the plot to kill the President are said to have shocked the politburo including members who had been backing VP Mujuru. Again the names of the shocked are not revealed and this might just be a statement to show that what Mujuru was scheming was devious. There are also claims of a voice recording of Rugare Gumbo saying Mugabe will be removed the Kabila way. Again this is based on rumours and hearsay.

The paper also makes unproven claims in an editorial on “*So near yet so far for Mujuru*” (01/12/14) that Mujuru worked with the MDC-T to block the July 2013 harmonised elections, allowed MDC-T’s Thokozani Khupe to be the leader of women’s parliamentary caucus at the expense of Zanu PF’s Monica Mutsvangwa, and was responsible for the election of MDC-T’s Lovemore Moyo as House of Assembly Speaker with the blessing of ZANU PF’s Members of Parliament. All these claims are sensational as there is no evidence to support them and when they were first reported, the connections with Mujuru were not made but only emerged in the construction of the “putschists” cabal framing.

Another story that makes outlandish claims is “*Mujuru sucked in fatal scandal*” (26/11/14). The story makes outlandish claims akin to fiction-writing as it alleges that Mujuru gave instructions to police to whisk her daughter (Chipo Mujuru-Makoni) away from the accident scene at a time when Mujuru was out of the country. The other unproven claims are that VP Mujuru changed the vehicle ownership from Chipo Makoni to government of Zimbabwe in order to clear her name. The story does not have comments from either the police or the complainant and only stated that the case could not go to court because it involved a daughter of a high profile person.

#### **4.8.4 Use of unidentified sources**

*The Herald* also made prevalent use of unidentified sources on stories, which reduces the credibility of the stories and makes them appear as fictitious pieces. Such practice is consistent with tabloid journalism whose purpose is to publish exciting information without attribution

and verification (Bird 1992, Sparks 2000, Franklin 1997). Examples of such stories include the story “*Police detectives interview Hwarare*” 26/11/16) by George Maponga) where Nicholas Goche is alleged to have said that there will be war at the 6<sup>th</sup> Zanu PF Congress and that people will “be flushed down the toilet”. In the story, the chief source, Hwarare, refused to comment while other people who were there when Goche allegedly made the comments, only identified as Cde Chihwa and Cde Masiya, were not asked for their comments. Also nothing was said about the interviews by the detectives. This then leaves the reader asking; so where is the story derived from when the chief sources refuse to comment unless it is a fabricated story?

A story on the same issue on the previous day, “*Goche talked of bloodshed: Hwarare*” (25/11/14 by Tawanda Mangoma), is curiously based on an interview with Addmore Hwarare long after *The Herald* and *The Sunday Mail* had previously written the story. The previous stories could have been pure fiction if not outright fabrications as the chief source in the story Addmore Hwarare, the Secretary General for Zimbabwe Sugar Milling Industry complained that *The Herald* were interviewing him after they had written the story;

I am not the one who brought the matter into the papers but I was visited by some intelligence personnel whom I told what had transpired at the meeting...I can confirm meeting the minister but it is unfortunate that you now want to ask me about the matter after you have already written about it.

The story also established links with the claims that Didymus Mutasa and Rugare Gumbo said if Mugabe blocks Mujuru he will be shot dead and deposed the Kabila way and that Goche was addressing the Zimbabwe Sugar Cane Millers whose patron was VP Mujuru in order to link her with the plots to kill the president. It also repeated the sensational allegations that Goche met potential hit-men in Israel and South Africa to explore the assassination possibilities and that he used official government business to Switzerland to make the stop-overs and meet potential hit-men without presenting any evidence to support such claims.

Another tabloid format employed by *The Herald* is the use of suspicious sources to substantiate their stories. For example, “*VP Mujuru expelled herself*” (22/11/14), which uses a controversial source in the form of a self-declared fierce Mujuru critic Christopher Mutsvangwa to describe what he called Mujuru’s legendary ineptitude;

VP Mujuru had become the single biggest hindrance to the implementation of government policies through her corrupt deals...her continuous rebellion is a measure of how deep her rebellion was. She must stop the nonsense of holding all party cadres who were in support of her under the illusion that she had an autonomous parallel centre of power.



In the corruption story, “*Mujuru fingered in chicken scam*” (11/11/14), *The Herald* again relies on a declared Mujuru adversary Christopher Mutsvangwa as the chief source to make sensational allegations that Mujuru used her official business to Brazil to broker a deal to import chickens despite an existing ban on such imports. Mutsvangwa alleges that Mujuru wanted to see the local poultry industry collapse and portray the land reform as a failure. He says she delivered the chicken to the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) in order to buy their loyalty in her regime change efforts. Such kind of reporting is based on unconfirmed information which is a key characteristic of tabloids (Bird 1992, Bakkes 1999, Esser 1999).

Furthermore, *The Herald* also uses another publicly declared Mujuru adversary, Justice Mayor Wadyajena in ZANU PF, to describe Mujuru as a “Judas” who wanted to kill the president through demonic schemes; “*Congress is judgement day for VP Mujuru- MP*” (3/11/12). Reliance on such sources of low credibility is typical of tabloids in order to just to publish stories in order to attract audiences and push sales since tabloids are there to offer people some form of relaxation and fun through gossip, sensation, sex, sleaze and celebrity scandals (Bird 1992, Franklin 1997, Kurtz 1996).

#### **4.8.5 Dramatisation and sensationalisation**

Like tabloids, *The Herald* also made use of sensational headlines such as “*Tsvangirai confirms Mujuru links*” (15/09/15) which report that Morgan Tsvangirai admitted that there was a possibility of working together with Joice Mujuru, which Tsvangirai refuted by claiming that;

How is it a coalition when the people involved have not yet discussed the issue, discussions are not coalitions, any coalition is based on institutional relations and not individuals. Mai Mujuru has not launched a party you cannot talk of a coalition of Mujuru and Tsvangirai when she has no party, Tsvangirai said in an interview with a local private radio ZiFM.

Sensational stories and headlines are a tabloid technique which is meant to stimulate responses in terms of emotion and moral aesthetics. Sensationalism is designed to cause titillation and amusement contributes very little if anything to political understanding and is a pointer to deteriorating standards of journalism. In this sense, sensationalism threatens the practice of journalism (Grabe, Long and Zhao 2003).

Another aspect of the coverage which reflected tabloid journalism is the reliance on one source in news stories “*Goche linked to MDC-T regime change agenda*” (26/11/14), where it relies on one Godfrey Tsenengamu, a provincial youth chairman for Mashonaland Central province

linked to a ZANU PF faction opposed to Mujuru, to make sensational claims that Goche and his team were plotting to unseat President Mugabe as first secretary of the party and replace him with Vice President Joice Mujuru and that he (Goché) worked with MDC-T to ensure that the opposition wins elections so as to prolong the life of the GNU. The other allegation is that Goche was misleading the people that MDC-T and ZANU PF had merged and pleaded with them to treat Tsvangirai as one of their leaders. It thus relegates the concept of objectivity because the side of Goche was not presented, which is a key attribute in journalism.

Dramatisation was also employed in the use of the “confession” by Jabulani Sibanda that Joice Mujuru cannot be crucified for the deeds of General Mujuru because she inherited the estate are used to justify that Mujuru is corrupt; *“Jabu confesses to VP Mujuru deals: Confirms extortion allegations: VP hands not clean, Analysts”* (28/10/14). The story relies on a report by NewsDay newspaper and a ZANU PF legislator and lawyer Jonathan Samkange and other unnamed lawyers to substantiate the allegations of corruption and extortion. The fact that Mujuru inherited the estate of her late husband who is described as corrupt means she is also corrupt yet she is also accused of being cruel and greedy for failing to register the estate four years after the death of General Solomon Mujuru, thereby prejudicing potential beneficiaries and the economy of the country through taxes due on the estate.

*The Herald* uses Sibanda statement in the story that “If the president does wrong, I won’t insult Grace Mugabe so you can’t insult Joice Mujuru because she is not Solomon Mujuru who they accuse of all those things”. It simplistically uses this quote from another newspaper as proof that Mujuru is corrupt and then links it to utterances by First Lady at her rallies that Mujuru engaged in illicit diamond dealings, bribery and extortion. Also the use of an unnamed lawyer as a source raises suspicions on why a lawyer would withhold their name over an issue were they are confirming that a person is corrupt. Furthermore, the story makes outlandish claims that; “It is common cause that this was a family business and VP Mujuru would obviously know that people were being extorted and she has not distanced herself from that”.

The story does not provide details to support the sensational headline and draws simple connotations using a simplified casual tone. There is also no effort to contact either Jabulani Sibanda or Joice Mujuru but *The Herald* published the story with information from another newspaper and relied on unnamed sources and made no attempts to balance the story in terms of comments from the persons affected.

Attention getting headlines such as “*Court orders Mujuru to pay \$1,5 million*” (07/11/15) were extensively used in the sensational claims that Mujuru’s world is crumbling around her without facts to support the claims. The article is in sharp contrast with earlier allegations that Mujuru is corrupt because she inherited the estate of her late husband and chastises her for taking years to register the estate at High Court after some beneficiaries registered complainants at the Master of High Court citing prejudice. The same article makes effective use of colour pages by printing a large photograph of a seemingly confused and worried Joice Mujuru holding her chin and a bigger picture of her late husband with red eyes coupled with a background of crops in a field.

Also the story’s chief source, the executor of the estate, Sten Mufara, was reported to be unreachable as his phone went unanswered and that is used as justification for publishing the story without comments as justification for the biased article with only one side of the story being presented. No efforts were made to contact Mujuru on the issue as the story did not include her comments.

In another scandal story “*VP Mujuru in \$4 million scandal. Customs duty evasion cited, Ex-company owner bares soul*”( 29/11/14)*The Herald* makes sensational allegations that Mujuru allowed relatives to import chickens without paying duty using her position to order the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) to release the trucks carrying the imported chickens. The story has no comment from ZIMRA, instead it relies on the former owner of the company and other unnamed sources making it either sensational, fictitious or motivated by unknown interests.

The sensational claims on corruption are also made in the story “*GMO+ Scandal rocks food sector, VP Mujuru sucked in. Millions creamed off*” (02/11/14) that Mujuru through the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) boss Albert Mandizha bought GMO+ maize at US\$ 180 per tonne and sold it at \$390 and the profits were used to fund Mujuru political activities. It is alleged that the maize was sold to food processing companies and unsuspecting individuals.

One of the companies where the GMO+ maize was sold, Nestle Zimbabwe is reported to have one of its product testing positive for GMO+ culminating in a row with another company National Foods Limited where a Mujuru ally (Ray Kaukonde) is reported to have a substantial stake. In the writing of the story the paper used suspicious or low credibility sources such “documents in *The Herald’s* possession” unnamed sources, or simply sources or being based on statements such as “*The Herald* has it on good authority”.

The paper chose to seek comment from former Nestle Zimbabwe Managing director Kumbirai Katsande who refused to comment while no comment was obtained from National Foods Operations Executive Chipso Nheta leading to the publication of an unbalanced story which relied on fictitious and unnamed sources such as “sources, however said yesterday that some products that were procured by Nestle Zimbabwe from National Foods were tested and proved to contain GMOs and were rejected”

*The Herald* also dramatised stories around Mujuru’s and her allies such as Nicholas Goche, Didymus Mutasa and Flora Bhuka who were portrayed as having been ill because of the allegations that they wanted to kill the president or to confirm that they were guilty in the story “*Mutasa ill*” (2/12/14) which reports that;

Two Zanu PF heavyweights named as kingpins in the plot to assassinate President Mugabe have been ill after being rejected ahead of the party’s National People’s Congress that begins in Harare today” (2/12/14).

*The Herald* also makes simplistic assumptions that Mujuru and her allies have fallen ill because they are guilty of the allegations they are facing. Mutasa was reported to be in South Africa, Goche in Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at a private hospital due to hypertension, Mujuru was believed to be ill while Flora Bhuka collapsed after losing the Central Committee seat as the three were “named as honchos in the plot to assassinate President Mugabe”. The story is written using sources only referred to as “sources” or “insiders”.

In the story “*Mujuru faces jail: President*” (5/12/14) the headline is sensational and misleading as the president only said Mujuru will be prosecuted if the allegations against her are proved. The headline suggests that Mujuru has already been found guilty. It is meant to attract readers because prosecution does not always lead to conviction. Another misleading and sensational headline is “*Mujuru probe hots up*” (18/12/14) because the story relies on unnamed sources as the chief Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) spokesperson Senior Assistant Commissioner Charity Charamba or her juniors who give official comments on high profile people in society did speak on the matter.

The paper went on to publish the rest of the story, which does not deal with the issue of the probe as suggested by the headline but simply repeats the allegations that Mujuru was facing to give weight to the story without giving any new developments or a fresh angle. This is a typical tabloid style of drawing reader attention where there is no real story. Readers would

buy the newspaper in anticipation of new facts but they get a repetition of what has been said previously.

Other sensational claims that were published by *The Herald* include that Ray Kaukonde forged educational certificates in the story “*First Lady calls for Mujuru resignation*” (18/11/14). The editorial “*Mujuru blown away by own bomb*” (10/12/14) makes sensational allegations which include that Mujuru was funding factional activities through the destruction of parastatals and state enterprises and frustrating the implementation of all efforts at economic revival. It is highly unlikely that the destruction of state parastatals and other state enterprises could have been a result of the actions of any one individual whilst everyone including the government and the president were watching thereby making these allegations not only sensational but trivial and simplistic.

*The Herald* went overboard with sensational claims that Mujuru facilitated the abuse of girls in the guerrilla war camps; “*Mujuru is the new Humpty Dumpty*” (25/06/16), which further alleges that that;

Mujuru is well known for her cruelty and greed, meanness in her province, where she failed to develop a school or road or harness the potential but instead became filthy rich while the people wallow in poverty since 1980.

While there maybe an element of truth in the above statement, it remains an exaggeration that she did nothing in the development of her home district and the country at large. Content analysis findings on the sensationalisation of the framing of Mujuru, especially on treason and corruption allegations, were confirmed by respondent’s responses. Respondents noted that all the stories were largely one-sided encounters devoid of any shred of evidence to back the allegations. This was aptly summed by one media academic who noted that:

The coverage of Joice Mujuru was without doubt based on sensationalism as not a shred of evidence was produced on the accusations. If she did not down the helicopter, then surely ZANU PF or ZANLA should have some records which showed which group did so and whether Joice Mujuru was part of that or not. As many of the accusations on Joice Mujuru were based on statements of various people, some who claimed to know her or know something about her. There were accusations of corruption i.e. 10% bribe demands which were never proven. In all the Joice Mujuru stories by *The Herald* there was hardly any document, written signed, or otherwise produced to support the accusations. It was all hearsay or hired mouths. On the basis of this *The Herald* was not only defamatory by became sensationally unethical in its reporting. (Interview 24/02/17).

Also, respondents noted that any conclusion in a story must be supported by arguments (empirical evidence) to remove doubt and explanations to improve understanding which *The Herald* failed to do but simply relied on what ZANU PF and its apologists said without even giving space to counter arguments. (*Interview 20/02/17*)

However, one respondent argued on the contrary, saying that the expulsion of Mujuru and others from ZANU-PF was in itself dramatic and sensational, and the media did not create the sensationalism;

It was actually what the politicians did, with the aid of the media. At the material time Dr Mujuru was not forthcoming with an alternative voice to the saga, and her aides were equally reticent. This left the media to rely heavily on the side that was providing its views on Dr Mujuru. (*Interview 22/02/17*).

This sentiment therefore brings to the fore the debate on the different interpretations of the meaning of sensationalism or tabloidisation as some scholars argue that the media do not promote or create sensation because sometimes facts are sensational (Ornebring and Jonsson 2004).

#### **4.8.6 Individualisation**

*The Herald* resorted to the tabloid style of focusing on the individual and ignoring the subject matter (Bakkes 1999, Kurtz 1996). The articles on Mujuru were highly personified as they focused on her person and not the issue or allegations. For example, articles on the BUILD blueprint “*Mujuru headed for sunset: MDC-T, analysts slates manifesto*” (10/09/15). This article focuses more on Mujuru the person more than on the subject matter, the BUILD manifesto. Instead of unpacking what is wrong with the manifesto, more focus is on Mujuru as an individual and how she is an incapable leader. By doing so readers are left with little understanding of the issue and are whipped into dismissing the blueprint. The article also lacks balance and impartiality expected in a hard news story as it relies on sources support one side. In addition, the story also is filled with unconfirmed gossip and speculation that Ibbo Mandaza is the author of BUILD and that Mujuru copied and pasted the manifesto thereby promoting Western interests. The focus thus remains more on Mujuru as a person and not the subject matter which is a critic of the BUILD manifesto.

In an opinion article “*Mujuru is reluctant, incapable BUILDer*” (09/09/15), *The Herald* resorts to character assassination by stating that Mujuru is a “generally plain and unimaginative,

uncreative and not so bright woman has not shown any capability as a strategic thinker”. The tabloid style of focusing on personal background is also employed especially by the emphasis on the name “Teurai Ropa” instead of the issue at hand. The whole framing is meant to focus on the person instead of dealing with the allegations and providing the necessary evidence to support the allegations.

#### **4.8.7 Information distortion**

The conscious manipulation of information to gain political advantage was extensively employed by *The Herald* in its coverage of the expulsion of Mujuru from ZANU PF. It extensively employed tabloid reporting techniques such as mixing opinion and facts and misrepresentation of facts. Information was manipulated to print sensational allegations. In a story “*ZANU PF dismisses manifesto*”(10/09/15), MDC-T spokesperson Obert Gutu is portrayed as crying foul that Mujuru plagiarised their Agenda for Real Transformation (ART) document in coming up with BUILD manifesto when in actual fact Gutu just pointed on the similarities of the blueprints. *The Herald* twists the statement by Gutu that;

In a way the Mujuru policy blueprint is speaking our language, the document is singing our chorus ... as MDC-T we feel humbled and flattered that the BUILD manifesto mirrors what we have already stated in our JUICE and ART policy blueprints

The statement is used to claim that Mujuru copied and pasted MDC-T documents to come up with BUILD and thus she is not a capable leader. Furthermore, the story uses an attention getting headline as the rest of the story reports on the activities of the ZANU PF politburo activities while it uses the headline to grab reader attention. The story does not discuss the shortcomings and or strengths of BUILD except that it is copied and pasted from the MDC-T as the reason why it should be dismissed.

Also in the story “*Mujuru headed for sunset, MDC-T, analysts slate manifesto*” (10/09/15), the article appears on the news page and is presented as a news article yet it is opinionated and misrepresents facts as the MDC-T did not slate Mujuru’s BUILD document, but only acknowledged that Mujuru’s ideas mirrored their own. The paper relied extensively on the same sources with predictable sentiments such as Charity Manyeruke, Goodwine Mureriwa, and Tendai Toto whose views on Mujuru have always been negative. No opposing views were included in order to make the stories balanced.

One of the sources in the story Ibbo Mandaza denied that he was the author of BUILD stating that “Just because I came out in the paper in support of the document, you can’t then think I wrote it” but *The Herald* went on to insist that Mujuru did not write the manifesto without giving evidence to support that position. Thus *The Herald* relied on unconfirmed gossip that Mandaza is the author of BUILD, Mujuru copied and pasted the manifesto and that she is parroting western interest.

This shows a gross simplification of an issue to reach a conclusion which most tabloids do despite Mandaza refuting that he authored the BUILD manifesto when he said “Just because I came out in the paper in support of the document, you can’t then think I wrote it”.

#### **4.9 Negative framing of Mujuru by *The Herald***

Content analysis findings demonstrate that the framing of Joice Mujuru by *The Herald* was derisive and pejorative. On one hand respondents attributed the entirely negative framing to the newspaper’s position in Zimbabwean politics as a willing tool and mouthpiece of the ruling ZANU PF party and control by the Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services through the permanent secretary who claims to speak on behalf of the President. To that effect respondents believe that *The Herald* purports to represent the official mind of the President. A former private newspaper editor noted that;

When Joice Mujuru fell out of favour with the President to pave the way for entry of his wife into mainstream politics she became the subject of attack (*by The Herald*). We should remember that previously Mugabe had piled praise on her, even hinting in 2004 that she was a possible successor. But he had to make a volte face in the most dramatic way by demystifying Mujuru hence the first line of attack was her credibility and war record. This was despite that she had served as his deputy for a decade. (*Interview 23/02/17*).

On the other hand, some respondents believe that while the tempo of vitriol against Mujuru was unbalanced and calculated to fell her, it was not clear whether or not she was an innocent victim at the hands of a politicised media house. Such assertions about the possibility of a politicised media house buttress the view that there could have been a political hand from other factional leaders and the minister of information at the time, Jonathan Moyo, which dictated the framing of Mujuru at *The Herald* through negative undertones because ZANU PF had rejected her. In the eyes of the respondents, *The Herald* thus became a willing tool of a faction in ZANU PF to amplify the alleged Mujuru flaws to justify her rejection and buttress “ the



negatives so that people will see the villain in Mujuru, and not the victim of political shenanigans” (Interview 18/02/17).

#### **4.10 Conclusion**

This chapter analysed the framing of the coverage of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF and government by *The Herald* newspaper from October 2014 up to January 2017 when she had proved beyond doubt that she was now an opposition political leader in Zimbabwe. Several frames such as putschists cabal, traitor/economic saboteur, incompetent/simpleton, corrupt, false war legend, regime change agent, greedy and cruel stepmother were identified.

In coming up with these frames, a representative story was selected for analysis to reveal the salient aspects of each frame using four categories namely; Words and Symbols - where an analysis of the article would reveal whether the framing is negative or positive, Preferred meanings – which would reveal the intended meanings that *The Herald* sought in the audience, Omission analysis – where an analysis of what the framing could have omitted or suppressed in the discourse of telling, and finally Limiting debate - where an analysis of what could have been left out in the story could either limit the debate in the way the framing was done. This chapter has demonstrated how *The Herald* framed the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF and the government.

In the putschists cabal frame, Mujuru was depicted as leading a cabal to oust President Mugabe from power through the alleged assassination plots by her allies such as Rugare Gumbo, Didymus Mutasa and Nicholas Goche. These allegations were also emphasised in other frames such as the traitor frame where she is accused of betraying both the president and the country by associating with what are perceived to be the enemies of the country - Western powers such as Britain, European Union and The United States of America. Furthermore, Mujuru was also framed as a simplistic thinker who cannot handle issues to do with statecraft, a corrupt person, an agent of regime change and a greedy and cruel stepmother. All these frames are interconnected as they reinforced each other with overlapping aspects but the most common thread is that they served to amplify that Mujuru wanted to take over power at all costs and should be ejected and rejected by ZANU PF supporters. The framing of Joice Mujuru by *The Herald* was derisive and pejorative and reflected the factional and power struggles within the party at the time. The reporting was biased against Mujuru and her allies. It was subjective and

did not conform to the dictates of broadsheet journalism. It adopted tabloid journalism styles. The framing also sought to justify her expulsion in the public eyes.

All the frames did not adhere to expected standards of a serious broadsheet newspaper because of the high level of sensationalisation as noted by one respondent who argued that *The Herald* coverage of Joice Mujuru was;

Without doubt based on sensationalism as not shred of evidence was produced on the accusations. If she did not down the helicopter, then surely ZANU PF or ZANLA should have some records which showed which group did so and whether Joice Mujuru was part of that or not. As many of the accusations on Joice Mujuru were based on statements of various people some who claimed to know her or know something about her. There were accusations of corruption i.e. 10% bribe demands which were never proven. In all the Joice Mujuru stories by *The Herald* there was hardly any document, written signed, or otherwise produced to support the accusations, It was all hearsay or hired mouths. On the basis of this *The Herald* was not only defamatory by became sensationally unethical in its reporting. (Interview 23/2/17).

The framing by *The Herald* demonstrates that the newspaper was undergoing the damaging process of tabloidisation where broadsheet journalism and tabloid journalism become indistinguishable. *The Herald* satisfied some of the key characteristics of tabloidisation such as focussing on the individual rather than the subject matter, putting less weight on in-depth analysis and political debate, taking issues out of context, flashy representation, reliance on rumour and hearsay and the use of sources of questionable credibility. The trend towards tabloidisation was also noted by one respondent who argued that *The Herald* cannot be trusted with providing information that can enable citizens to make informed political decisions after reading the paper. The respondent described the framing of Mujuru by *The Herald* as being based on manipulated information by political forces as he noted that;

The coverage was basically sensational. It was based on unsubstantiated allegations. Any conclusion must be supported by arguments (empirical evidence) to remove doubt and explanations to improve understanding. *The Herald* failed to do any of this. Instead, they only relied on what ZANU PF and its apologists without even giving space to counter arguments. (Interview 20/02/17).

The manipulation of *The Herald* by political forces also means that what comes out at the newspaper is propaganda which is paraded as news. The result of such actions is that the newspaper loses credibility and will not aid to the functioning of the public sphere of rational debate because it basically poisons and mislead thereby creating a distorted view of events

upon which the citizens will base their decisions on. This is aptly noted by one respondent on why the media resorts to sensationalisation and tabloidisation in that;

Sensationalism, tabloidisation, gossip are the fodder of political assassinations more so in environments of near media monopoly and authoritarianism. Resorting to this kind of media ensures that the target is caught up in attempting to explain none issues or gossip and not advancing their own positions. (*Interview: 21/2/17*).

The next chapter will focus on the framing of the Mujuru issue by the privately-owned newspaper - *Daily News*. The focus will be on comparing and contrasting the frames and analysing whether or not the framing also points towards the tabloidisation of political news.

## CHAPTER FIVE: THE FRAMING OF JOICE MUJURU BY *DAILY NEWS*.

### 5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter analysed the framing of Joice Mujuru by *The Herald*. The chapter argued that the in *The Herald* framing of Mujuru was perjorative and derisive and points towards the tabloidisation of political news reporting in Zimbabwe. This current chapter presents an analysis of the frames used by the *Daily News* in the coverage of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF party and the government. The chapter also assesses whether or not the framing employed tabloid news reporting techniques such as sensationalism, subjectivity, voyeurisms, trivialisation among others. This chapter evaluates the nature and consequences of using tabloid techniques such as sensationalism and trivialisation in the coverage of serious political issues in the country. An analysis of *Daily News* articles from October 2014 to January 2017 reveals the construction of ideological frames in terms of the sympathetic, victim, brave leader, mature leader, counter frame and grand coalition are given salience.

The analysis will also demonstrate that these frames are not entirely confined to a single story because the frames intersect and overlap in individual stories and reinforce each other. Goffman (1974), Entman (1993) and Butler (2009) argue that framing is possible through the use of word choices, metaphors, exemplars, descriptions, arguments and visual images to deal with justifications, causes and consequences.

### 5.1 Sympathetic frame

*Daily News* presented Joice Mujuru as a defenceless widow deserving public sympathy after what is described as a brutal ouster from ZANU PF by powerful forces led by President Mugabe and his wife. To bring out the sympathetic framing, the story “*Grace, the power behind the throne*” (7/11/14) will be analysed below.

# Grace, the power behind the throne

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**H**ATE her or love her, President Robert Mugabe's feisty wife has proved to be a significant political power broker over the past few months that she has been in formal politics.

Both friends and foes also agree that there is little doubt that she is at the centre of the seismic changes that are taking place within Zanu PF, a sign that analysts say also indicates that she wields substantial influence on her nonagenarian husband.

Her controversial and phenomenal rise has set tongues wagging both inside and outside Zanu PF, and well beyond the country's borders.

Grace was surprisingly nominated to lead the party's powerful Women's League in June this year, taking over from Oppah Muchinguri.

Following her nomination Grace embarked on her controversial "Meet-the-people" tour, which she successfully used to demolish embattled Vice President Joice Mujuru and all her perceived allies.

She called for Mujuru's immediate resignation during these opaque rallies, threatening that failure to do so by the VP would result in action being taken to remove her from both her party and government positions.

She accused Mujuru of

corruption, incompetence, fanning factionalism and working to topple her husband from power.

Mujuru's perceived allies also came under the cosh during the rallies, with former Zanu PF Mashonaland East provincial chairperson Ray Kaukonde particularly becoming a major target and being accused of gross corruption, womanising and allegedly playing a central role in the murky plot to oust Mugabe from power.

She even publicly stated at one point that she disliked Kaukonde intensely, saying, "Kaukonde, *ndakamumaka*, (I have got him in my sights) big time".

And true to Grace's sentiments, which are now carrying the day, Kaukonde together with other provincial chairpersons that she had mouthed all fell by the wayside in the party's tumultuous build-up to this week's congress.

After weeks of virulent attacks on Mujuru and her allies by Grace, her husband incrementally supported her, putting Mujuru under the spotlight.

So fouled did the relationship between Grace and Mujuru become that the two would not even shake hands on a number of occa-

sions that Mugabe went on his external sojourns.

And after weeks of Grace's frenzied attacks on Mujuru, she finally got her wishes at this week's congress, with the VP's brutal ouster from power — and with Mugabe reading from the same page as his young wife.

A central committee member aptly said yesterday that any Zimbabwean who "crosses Amai's (First Lady Grace) path does so at their own peril".

Indeed, Mugabe praised his wife this week claiming that she had stopped his

would-be assassins dead in their tracks with her timely whistle-blowing — a sentiment that was repeated *ad nauseum* by his bootlicking minions throughout the week.

For example, National Assembly speaker Jacob Muredenda went to town praising Grace during the congress, claiming that her revelations had saved Mugabe from being toppled.

"Thanks to the revelations made by the mother of revelations Dr Mugabe, this helped us to know what was happening," he said.

Grace herself boasted about how she had played a crucial role in Mujuru's elevation to the position of vice president in 2004, and how now that she wanted the VP to resign immediately, there was no other way to go except down for Solomon Mujuru's widow.

So destroyed did Mujuru become that she even failed to attend the "damp squib" congress fearing for her life.

This has left her immediate "rival" Justice minister Emmerson Mnangagwa in the pounds seat to succeed Mugabe.

But all wise heads say it cannot be ruled out that Grace herself still has ambitions to succeed her husband.

This is despite the fact that some analysts believe that Grace is being used by some hardliners within the Mnangagwa faction.



GRACE MUGABE

Figure 10

## 5.1.1 Words and symbols

The story "Grace, the power behind the throne" (7/11/14) creates an image of a very powerful person in First Lady Grace Mugabe who is responsible for the firing of Vice President Joice

Mujuru from both party and government. The aspect of her power comes out clearly through the use of such words as “Robert Mugabe’s feisty wife”, “a significant power broker at the centre of seismic changes” or one who “wields substantial influence over her nonagenarian husband”. With this power, the First Lady is described as having successfully used it to “demolish embattled Vice President Joice Mujuru and all her perceived allies” who include the likes of Ray Kaukonde whom she openly chastised by saying *Kaukonde ndakamumaka* (I have him in my sights big time). The power of Grace Mugabe is also emphasised as *Daily News* reports that after “her frenzied attacks on Mujuru she was brutally ousted from power”.

To demonstrate the sympathy for Mujuru, the story “*Grace, the power behind the throne*” (7/11/14) chronicles the role that Grace Mugabe played in Mujuru’s elevation to the post of vice president in 2004 and her firing by stating that;

Now that she (Grace Mugabe) wanted the Vice President to resign immediately, there was no other way to go except down for Solomon Mujuru’s widow... so destroyed did Mujuru become that she even failed to attend the damp squib congress fearing for her life.

The above quote suggests that Mujuru was a victim of powerful forces which ensured her downfall, especially after the death of her husband in a mysterious fire accident and as such she deserves sympathy as a defenceless widow whose life was also under threat.

### **5.1.2 Preferred meanings**

The net effect of the story “*Grace, the power behind the throne*” (7/11/14) was to prove beyond any reasonable doubt that Mujuru was a powerless victim of President Mugabe and his wife. *Daily News* described this ouster as a result of untested allegations of plotting to topple him and other charges. Another aspect was to project her as a defenceless widow who was now vulnerable and bound to lose regardless of whether she was guilty or not and resultantly ousted from power in what is described as brutal fashion. The preferred meaning is that Mujuru does not deserve public sympathy; that she was evil, because she is viewed by the party and government as orchestrating coup against the incumbent. The hidden message that surfaces from the ouster of Mai Mujuru is to send a warning to any ZANU PF dissenter that she/he would be treated in the same brutal and merciless manner that Mujuru had been subjected to. The story implies that Grace Mugabe was clearing the way either for herself or Mnangagwa by eliminating Mujuru. The preferred meaning is that Mujuru is an innocent victim sacrificed in the vicious factional power struggles in ZANU PF.

### 5.1.3 Omission analysis

The story “*Grace, the power behind the throne*” (7/11/14) is an editorialised one, presented on a news page laced with opinion to enlist sympathy for Joice Mujuru by dwelling on the excesses of Grace Mugabe, who is described as leading the firing all the people from ZANU PF who she did not like. The story deliberately omitted to tell the reader and show evidence of the alleged wrong doings of Mujuru. The story instead chose to concentrate on Grace Mugabe as an individual and how her actions resulted in the demise of Mujuru. Again *Daily News* seemed content with just defending Mujuru and campaigning for her thereby assuming the commissariat role as opposed to being a watchdog.

### 5.1.4 Limiting debate

The story “*Grace, the power behind the throne*” (7/11/14) failed to present objective information, leaving readers to speculate on the alternative viewpoints. The mixing of hard facts and opinion misleads readers who are made to believe that Grace Mugabe is the power behind the throne through speculative evidence. The presentation of Mujuru as a powerless victim seems calculated to imply that she was not planning or had no ambitions to be the president and was not leading a faction. This limited the debate on the issue. On the contrary indeed she had political ambitions as she eventually formed a political party.

The story “*Grace, the power behind the throne*” (7/11/14) has demonstrated, in its coverage, the *Daily News* displayed a sympathetic attitude towards Joice Mujuru and underplayed how she was embroiled in ZANU PF factional wars. The newspaper viewed her as a moderate leader who could succeed President Robert Mugabe and was critical of her perceived rival, Emerson Mnangagwa. The *Daily News* however does not state what it is about her that should make people think she is moderate when she has been involved in ZANU PF for more than 30 years.

In the sympathetic frame, the *Daily News* was always fighting in her corner and celebrated when her faction seemed to be winning the factional battles. In a front page story entitled “*This Stinks: Zanu PF masters of rigging, Plot to derail Mujuru*” 13/08/14) (p1) written in bold headline, the *Daily News* accuses what it describes as hardliners in Zanu PF to be working to derail her march to the presidency by rigging internal elections.

The newspaper states that the Zimbabwean constitution works in the favour of Mujuru in that she will take over if Mugabe leaves office, retires or be incapacitated. It also recalls the

statement by President Mugabe when Mujuru was elevated to the position of Vice President in 2004 that she should aim higher; “When you choose her as a vice president, you don’t want her to remain in that chair do you” “*This Stinks: Zanu PF masters of rigging, Plot to derail Mujuru*” 13/08/14). Using this justification, the *Daily News* portrays a picture that there is “palpable fear that Mujuru is already a president in waiting” “*This Stinks: Zanu PF masters of rigging, Plot to derail Mujuru*” 13/08/14).

Again in another story “*Mugabe backs Mujuru attacks*” (20/10/14) the *Daily News* portrays Mujuru as a defenceless widow who is under unwarranted attack by First Lady Grace Mugabe with the blessing of her husband President Mugabe. This portrayal is backed by the use of sensational comments by political analysts who have a soft spot for Mujuru. One of the extensively used sympathetic analysts, Pedzisai Ruhanya made a robust though unsubstantiated claim that;

Whatever Mujuru and her associates did or uttered has rattled the First Family and they no longer have trust in her. Grace needs to protect her economic and political interests because soon, her husband will be gone.

The statement by Ruhanya is sensational in that it makes a bold claim that President Mugabe will be gone soon as if he is privy to the day when he will die. Ruhanya’s statements are also backed by another extensively used analyst, Maxwell Saungweme, who also makes sensational claims that Mugabe is too old to fully understand what is going on in the country because “Grace knows this quite well as she shares bedroom with him”. In the absence of evidence, the above claims are without any basis and the connection between Mugabe not knowing what is going on and the sharing of the bedroom is trivial and makes entertaining and sexist connotations which are far divorced from the allegations that Mujuru was facing. This is news that does not enrich the public sphere just entertains in a typical tabloid style (Franklin 1999, Sparks 2000).

Moreover, the *Daily News* sought to depict Mujuru as a moderate leader who cannot be reduced to name-calling and mudslinging politics coming from the First Lady. Eldred Masunungure, a University of Zimbabwe lecturer and political scientist paints a picture that Mujuru is a seasoned stateswoman who reacts in a diplomatic way in light of the attacks by the First Lady because;

She (Mujuru) won’t react in public... she is an esteemed leader, a war veteran and a stateswoman. She will deal with the matter diplomatically and in a stateswomanly manner. Remember she is called Teurai Ropa (Spill Blood) but she is refrained



leader, she is mature. All these are qualities of a good leader and a statesperson.  
“*Mugabe backs Mujuru attacks*” (20/10/14).

The *Daily News*, in a bid to sympathise with Mujuru, went to the extent of using of unnamed sources to show that Mujuru would emerge victorious in the factional fights with her ZANU PF adversaries. In the story “*Politburo ignores Grace’s demands, Party demands reports on rallies*” (2/10/14) the *Daily News* makes it clear in the lead paragraph that Mujuru is winning the battle against the First Lady by stating that;

Yesterday’s much anticipated Politburo meeting ended in the dark and with a whimper, as expectations Vice President would be put under pressure or even be sacked as vociferously demanded by First Lady Grace Mugabe did not materialise.  
“*Politburo ignores Grace’s demands, Party demands reports on rallies*” (2/10/14).

The newspaper also relied on anonymous sources or what it called “insiders” to say that Mujuru camp was pushing for ZANU PF Women’s League leader to explain the circumstances surrounding what it termed “divisive rallies” where Grace Mugabe accused Mujuru of being corrupt and leading a faction in the party.

In further show of sympathy, the *Daily News* portrayed Mujuru as a moderate and a Christian who is prayerful and would not do anything evil in light of the attitude by Grace Mugabe. In the story “*Let us pray- Mujuru*” (10/11/14), Mujuru is portrayed as a devout member of the Salvation Army imploring Zimbabweans to pray for the country and peace. It makes constant reference to Mujuru as the widowed Vice President. Mujuru is also depicted as a victim who is being “lampooned in front of Mugabe’s youths bussed from Midlands to Harare” who are also referred to as “drunken yobs”. The story “*Let us pray - Mujuru*” (10/11/14) relies on unnamed analysts who praise Mujuru for keeping her counsel in;

. . . face of extreme provocation by her party rivals while her political foes have gone berserk in their propaganda against her over the past few months. She has laudably kept her cool choosing to soldier on quietly notwithstanding the well calculated smear campaigns in the state media. (10/11/14).

Speculative stories were employed by *Daily News* to argue that the firing of Mujuru from Zanu PF will have disastrous consequences. Such stories include the story “*Axing Mujuru will backfire*” (14/11/14) which speculates that if ZANU PF fires Mujuru this will benefit the opposition as a coalition will be formed and Mugabe will be kicked out. These assertions are based on gossip coming from Alex Magaisa, a lawyer and former advisor to MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai in the Inclusive Government, who alleges that;

Some legislators loyal to Mujuru have been whispering in quiet corners that they would engage in “Bhora Musango” if the party’s elective congress next month

decided to illegally strip the Vice President of her position in the party and government.

Furthermore, a war veteran and former ZANU PF politician Margaret Dongo is reported to have received death threats for saying that Vice President Mujuru was paying for the sins of her late husband Solomon Mujuru. Dongo says that Mugabe feared Solomon Mujuru. The clearest hint of the *Daily News*' sympathy for Mujuru comes in the form of an editorial comment; "*A regime gone mad*" (17/ 11/14), which appeared on the front page to show the importance and gravity of the matter. The editorial dismisses all the allegations against Mujuru by stating;

But even by their own lofty wicked standards, the authors of chaos outdid themselves yesterday when they manufactured and prompted the lickspittle state media to peddle, ever so faithfully and unquestionably the scurrilous claims that Vice President Joice Mujuru's supporters are allegedly plotting to not just topple, but also assassinate President Mugabe. What bull dust. "*A regime gone mad*" (17/ 11/14).

The above excerpt reflects the sympathetic framing of Joice Mujuru by the *Daily News* in which those who opposed Mujuru are described as wicked, manufacturing all the allegations and the public media derided as "lickspittle". The *Daily News* completely dismisses the allegations levelled against Mujuru as "scurrilous" and made by a mad regime. This is meant to make readers sympathise with her and see her as a victim of an evil regime.

While the *Daily News* attempted to give a platform to the story of Joice Mujuru, it failed to move beyond just reacting to what *The Herald* would have said in way that reflected the polarised media landscape in the country. The *Daily News* actually resorts to sensationalism as noted by one former editor who said;

The polarisation of the Zimbabwean media is now a matter of record. State-controlled papers such as *The Herald* are propaganda tools for the ruling party while privately-owned newspapers have thrown their weight behind opposition politics. Whereas *The Herald* sensationalises its reporting on behalf of the ruling party, the *Daily News* does the exact opposite. It's coverage of Mujuru was therefore as sensational as *The Herald's* but only in the exact opposite verbiage. (Interview 24/03/17)

The construction of a sympathetic frame resorts to the use of attention-getting and misleading headlines. This is the case with the depiction of Mujuru as a viable political alternative to Mugabe, projected to the extent of basing the stories on rumours and gossip. The use of attention-getting headlines is exhibited in the story "*Chihuri dismisses resignation rumours*" (21/11/14) which reported that Police Commissioner General Augustine Chihuri had resigned

from his post after pressure from ZANU PF “hawks” who accuse him of belonging to a faction aligned to Vice President Mujuru.

In the story “*Chihuri dismisses resignation rumours*” (21/11/14), Chihuri never reacted to the rumours or said anything to warrant such a headline. What the *Daily News* did was just to insert a statement that “But yesterday Chihuri never appeared to be under pressure as he went about his duties accompanying Chief Justice Godfrey Chidyausiku in inspecting a pass out parade”.

Furthermore, the rest of the story focuses on the speech by Chidyausiku as the reviewing officer at a police passout parade. The fact Chihuri never said anything makes the story a speculative fictional piece with calculated intention to attract attention and portray Mujuru and her allies as under siege and thus deserving sympathy. Other stories that also sought to show sympathy for Mujuru included “*Whither Mugabe assassination* (8/12/14), *Mujuru has legal options* 30/11/14, *Mugabe may be stuck with Mujuru- Analysts* 22/11/14, *Grace’s final push in limbo* 18/10/14, *Don’t kick out Mujuru- South Sudan envoy* 5/12/14, *Is Mugabe speaking through First Lady?* 18/10/14).

While fighting in Mujuru’s corner, the *Daily News* also sought to paint a picture that it will not be easy to remove Mujuru from the party compared to her post in the government. In this case the *Daily News* relies on the same people in its presentation of issues. The two analysts, Pedzisai Ruhanya and Alex Magaisa, are bitterly opposed to ZANU PF and are used to show support for Mujuru without even pointing out her own weaknesses. In so doing the *Daily News* becomes equally guilty of failing to be an alternative to *The Herald* by offering a biased and unproductive coverage of Mujuru.

Using the tabloid format of large pictures and screaming headlines on the front page and placing the story on the second page to attract reader attention, in the story “*Bloodbath in Zanu PF, At least 10 ministers, Over 100 MPs face chop* (05/11/14) the *Daily News* relies again on unnamed sources. To get by in a manner that short-changes the readers, the *Daily News* hides on phrases and constructions such as “sources” and “the *Daily News* has it on good authority” to authenticate its claims. In the process, the newspaper makes sensational claims that there will be bloodbath in ZANU PF as 10 ministers and 100 legislators will be expelled through “mindless bloodletting”. These allegations were based on rumours and mere speculation as there was no evidence presented to demonstrate that there was such a move.

The *Daily News* seemed content and comfortable with printing gossip and speculation to show sympathy for Mujuru when in fact the newspaper relies on questionable and unnamed sources.

This way of characterising reality is typical of tabloid newspapers' mode of pushing their own preferred agendas. This is reflected in the *Daily News* stories that relied on speculation such as "*Mujuru's poser: To or not attend Zanu PF congress*" (01/12/14) where the story portrayed Mujuru as feeling uncomfortable with attending the ZANU PF Congress. She is portrayed as being afraid of much bigger forces because "(the) under fire 59-year-old widow is now living in palpable fear following the purging of her allies and arrest of Jabulani Sibanda". Also the story "*Mujuru's poser: To or not attend Zanu PF congress*" (01/12/14) has no comment from Mujuru but relies on unnamed officials, a politburo member and a Harare provincial youth chairman Godfrey Gomwe who speculates that Mujuru was not feeling well as the reason for not being able to attend the ZANU PF congress.

The *Daily News* further provides justification for the failure of Mujuru to attend the Congress by presenting her as a victim of a brutal assault by ZANU PF. The story "*Mugabe threatens Mujuru with arrest*" (5/12/14) is used to highlight the possible consequences of her attending the ZANU PF Congress. The story alleges that President Mugabe had "ratcheted a brutal assault on embattled Vice President Mujuru, branding her a coward who was too scared to attend the on-going ZANU PF Congress" (p1). The paper opined that Mujuru would not attend a hostile gathering where hired thugs would rough her up and that she would have gained nothing by attending. This kind of framing was meant to sympathise and prove that Mujuru is a powerless and innocent woman being persecuted in the absence of her late powerful husband whom Mugabe allegedly feared.

The firing of Mujuru from her position as the Vice President and her allies is depicted as an earth-shattering move as indicated through big font headline with exclamation marks "*Carnage! As Mugabe sacks Mujuru, 8 ministers* (10/12/14). The story describes the sacking of Mujuru as potentially catastrophic while at the same time describing her as a brave leader who would not quit the party despite being fired from government.

To highlight its sympathy for Mujuru, the *Daily News* describes the firing of Mujuru as "blood bath", "hasty" and "ill-considered". All these descriptions come from unnamed analysts. Mujuru and her fired allies are presented as moderates and pragmatists compared to Mnangagwa and his allies who are also described as radicals and zealots. This makes it clear that *Daily News* sympathised with Mujuru to the extent of resorting to tabloid tactics such as editorialising in order to support her.

What then becomes clear in the sympathetic frame is that for the *Daily News* Mujuru is always correct and a victim. Such fixed positioning is counterproductive in terms of offering audiences informed positions. It naturally leads to the abandonment of ethical journalism leading to sensationalism, trivialisation and voyeurism associated with tabloids. The pressure to peddle subjective information in support of politicians like Mujuru by the *Daily News* also leads to the tabloidisation as it relied more on gossip, rumours and unnamed sources.

A case in point is the editorialisation by the *Daily News* in an attempt to sympathise with Mujuru in the story “*Infighting destroying Zanu PF*” (7/12/14), where an opinion is inserted in a hard news story to show support for Mujuru that;

Vice President Joice Mujuru and her allies have been under siege with hawks in the party pushing for their ouster on unsubstantiated allegations of plotting to assassinate Mugabe “*Infighting destroying Zanu PF*” (7/12/14).

To further enhance the sympathetic frame, the *Daily News* published a speculative story based on anonymous sources to show that President Mugabe hated Mujuru as the justification for all the allegations against her. The story “*Mugabe never liked Joice*” (15/4/15) alleges that Mugabe had always sidelined Mujuru for the 10 years that she worked as his deputy and denied her benefits that other vice presidents were given such as her predecessors, namely, Emmerson Mnangagwa and Phelekezela Mphoko.

The anonymous sources alleged that it was clear that Mujuru and her late husband Solomon were always targeted by Mugabe and his “henchmen from day one” (p1) because he wanted to appoint his own successor and never wanted the successor to be an elected person. The allegations of hate are supported by assertions that Mujuru was always given old cars and relied on pool cars unlike Mnangagwa and Mphoko, further noting that the Mujurus had to purchase their Chisipite home using their own resources instead of the state doing so.

Furthermore, the Mujurus are also alleged to have lost the farms they bought in 1984 in Shamva, which the late General Mujuru bought because he felt that the only thing he could do well was farming since he was not educated. The supposedly chief victim that the *Daily News* sympathised with in the story, Joice Mujuru refused to comment on the story saying “I am busy” thereby making the whole story either a fictitious piece or sensational one meant to push sales in typical tabloid style (Sampson 1996).

In a further show of sympathy for Mujuru, the *Daily News* published sensational claims by Mujuru that her husband had been murdered without mentioning the killers. These sensational

claims are made in the story “*They murdered my husband - Mujuru, but declines to name the killers for now*” (23/02/16), in which the *Daily News* made an uncritical analysis in that it never questioned the basis for the allegations but in tabloid style simply splashed the headline to attract audiences.

In the same story “*They murdered my husband - Mujuru, but declines to name the killers for now*” (23/02/16) the elder brother of the late general, Joel Mujuru was given acres of space to the extent of revealing that his brother’s spirit would confront the killers and other intimate details all in order to draw the readers’ sympathy to the late general’s wife (Joice Mujuru) who was described as “defenceless” in light of the attacks.

The sympathetic framing is also demonstrated in the revelations that the ouster of Mujuru was brutal and was done at the instigation of President Mugabe. This is revealed in the story “*Mujuru ouster: Fresh details emerge*” (5/08/16), which is based on a single source in the form of former ZANU PF Mashonaland Central Youth chairperson Godfrey Tsenengamu - a self-declared ally of Mnangagwa who claimed that the ouster of Mujuru from the government and ZANU PF was a well-choreographed move that was personally planned by the President. The story alleges that President Mugabe personally pushed youths to attack the “popular widow of the revered late liberation struggle icon General Solomon Mujuru” (p1).

Tsenengamu alleged that;

. . . my attack on Mujuru and other senior leadership of the party which included Simon Khaya Moyo, Webster Shamu, Didymus Mutasa, Sydney Sekeramayi, David Parirenyatwa, Nicholas Goche, Amos Midzi, Tendai Savanhu, and Paddy Zhanda on Friday 15 August 014 was rehearsed with the President himself... we did that on Wednesday 13 August 2014 where he encouraged us to take Mujuru and her team head on and we believed that she was under genuine attack. “*Mujuru ouster: Fresh details emerge*” (5/08/16).

Whether the planning and instigation of her ouster was done by President Mugabe is beyond the scope of this study but what is critical is that the *Daily News* never questioned the authenticity of these claims coming specifically from a person who had been demoted from his post in ZANU PF and who supported a rival faction to Mujuru. A serious publication such as the *Daily News* was at least expected to interrogate the intentions of people who volunteer such political information. It seems the *Daily News* was content with publishing the sensational information as long as it sold its newspaper and support of Mujuru or anyone opposed to President Mugabe and ZANU PF. Such uncritical and unethical practices are the staple diet of

tabloids whose main purpose is just to entertain and provide information that does not aid the functioning of the public sphere (Franklin 1997, McNair 2001, Sparks and Tulloch 2000).

## 5.2 Victim frame

In its sympathies for Mujuru, the *Daily News* sought to portray her as a victim of ZANU PF fights led by First Lady Grace Mugabe at the instigation of President Mugabe. To bring out the victimhood as framed, “*Mujuru fears for her life... Attend at own risk, Mujuru warned... Mugabe says VP wants him out (3/12/14)*” we start to analyse the words and images of story below.

# Mujuru fears for her life

**Thugs harass, abuse Sekeramayi's wife**

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IN A disturbing start to Zanu PF's anticlimactic congress, the wife of senior politburo member and Defence minister Sydney Sekeramayi, Tsitsi, was heckled, harassed and physically abused by rowdy youths at the party's headquarters in Harare yesterday.

Analysts said the attack was an ominous warning to embattled Vice President Joice Mujuru and all senior party officials perceived to be sympathetic to her — who stand accused of plotting to oust and assassinate President Robert Mugabe.

The agitated yobs shamefully pushed and harangued Sekeramayi, a mother of seven, in the full glare of assembled journalists — barring her from seeking accreditation for Zanu PF's damp squib “elective” congress that starts in earnest tomorrow (Thursday).

**Continued on: P2**

**Attend at own risk, Mujuru warned**

**Mugabe says VP wants him out**



**WHERE'S EVERYBODY?:** President Robert Mugabe cuts a lone figure at yesterday's Zanu PF politburo meeting in Harare.  
Pic: Annie Mpalume

**Mugove Tafirenyika and Fungwi Kwaramba**  
STAFF WRITERS

**V**ICE President Joice Mujuru skipped the Zanu PF politburo meeting that was held in Harare yesterday, amid suggestions that she was considering boycotting altogether the party's damp squib congress that starts in earnest tomorrow.

Well-placed sources told the *Daily News* last night that the embattled VP feared for her life following serious and ongoing threats against her, as well as other senior officials perceived to be loyal to her by her hardline party enemies.

Mujuru's untenable standing in the party was worsened after President Robert Mugabe openly accused her yesterday — the first time he

**Continued on: P2**





Figure 11

### 5.2.1 Words and Images

In the story “*Mujuru fears for her life....attend at own risk, Mujuru warned... Mugabe says VP wants him out*” (3/12/14), Mujuru is portrayed as considering boycotting what is described as a “damp squib” congress due to fear for her life following what are described as “serious and ongoing threats against her”. Those who are threatening her are also described as “hardline party enemies”. The effect of all such descriptions is to paint a victim in Mujuru. Also the words in the headline such as “fears for her life”, “warned”, “attend at own risk” and “Mugabe says VP wants him out” are meant to create the impression that Mujuru is a victim of much bigger forces including the President himself. Furthermore the picture that accompanies the story contains empty chairs where Mujuru and her ally, Didymus Mutasa, should have occupied. This is also meant to show that the fear by Mujuru was real hence her failure to attend the politburo meeting and the congress that followed.

The victim in Mujuru is also shown through the use of phrases such as “beleaguered widow of the late liberation war icon”, “Mugabe viciously attacked his deputy” “youths were baying for her blood warning that she would be blocked from registering and attending the congress”,



“Mugabe’s wife vowed not to allow the beleaguered VP anywhere near the party headquarters”. All these phrases emphasised the fact that indeed Mujuru was a vulnerable victim from the President and all the organs of the party.

### **5.2.2 Preferred meanings**

The story “*Mujuru fears for her life....attend at own risk, Mujuru warned... Mugabe says VP wants him out*” (3/12/14) is meant to portray a picture of Mujuru as a victim facing threats from all ZANU PF organs at the instigation of its leader President Mugabe. The depiction of Mujuru as a victim is meant to enlist public sympathy towards her and dismiss the ZANU PF Congress as a non-event because of the alleged intimidation of Mujuru and her allies with the youths vowing to eliminate Mujuru and her allies politically. The *Daily News* sought to reveal that Mujuru was a victim of the machinations of what it describes as “hardliners” in the ZANU PF party. Furthermore the *Daily News* sought to portray the picture that Mujuru was being punished for being ambitious to become the president of Zimbabwe.

### **5.2.3 Omission analysis**

The story “*Mujuru fears for her life....attend at own risk, Mujuru warned... Mugabe says VP wants him out*” (3/12/14) fails among other factors to present the voice of Joice Mujuru but relied mostly on anonymous sources to explain her absence. It speculates on the reasons to paint a picture of a Mujuru under siege. If such information for Mujuru or any of her allies was made available it would have aided in understanding whether her absence from congress was due to fear or other factors.

### **5.2.4 Limiting debate**

The story, “*Mujuru fears for her life....attend at own risk, Mujuru warned... Mugabe says VP wants him out*” (3/12/14) is based mainly on the use of anonymous sources and with clear bias to elicit sympathy for Mujuru who is highly individualised. All the focus is on Mujuru as a person and not on the issues or allegations that she was facing. Such kind of writing does not lead to any critical analysis as it obscures the important political conflicts with the fragmenting ZANU PF party. The story “*Mujuru fears for her life....attend at own risk, Mujuru warned... Mugabe says VP wants him out*” (3/12/14) is thus meant to enlist sympathy for Mujuru without attempting to interrogate whether she was guilty or not. This way of depicting Mujuru as an innocent and defenceless widow facing unjust persecution tends to skirt the idea of questioning Mujuru on her political activities while he she was still in the ZANU PF party

Another story entitled “*Is Mujuru facing imminent arrest?.....as VP launches a spirited fight back (17/11/14)*” is based on speculation as it reported that ;

Speculation was rife yesterday that beleaguered vice president Joice Mujuru could face imminent arrest over sensational claims by state media that her supporters were plotting to assassinate President Robert Mugabe (p1).

The *Daily News* also tried to dismiss the allegations Mujuru was facing using sources described as either unnamed or well placed to claim that;

last night the assassination plot and treason allegations being levelled against perceived followers of Mujuru were only meant to ensure that the 59-year-old widow of the late liberation war hero Solomon Mujuru did not have a snowball’s chance in hell at Zanu PF’s December elective congress. “*Is Mujuru facing imminent arrest?.....as VP launches a spirited fight back (17/11/14)*” (p1).

In addition, the allegations were further dismissed as “nothing more than mere sabre-rattling and crass skulduggery” with the story having no comments being obtained from the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) or the police who are the legitimate sources that should comment on such political matters. The *Daily News* chose to rely on unnamed analysts. The heavy reliance on unnamed sources raises the possibility of fake news, distortion and outright lies. This unethical behaviour by the media, where it spreads speculation, negates its watchdog role as the fourth estate and a pillar of democracy by extending the frontiers of ignorance as opposed to enlightenment (Franklin 1997).

The victim image of Mujuru is carried in yet another story in the *Daily News* entitled “*Mujuru attacks now comical: analysts*” (21/11/14). The story described the attacks on Mujuru by First Lady Grace Mugabe as only providing means of amusement and led by politicians who control *The Herald* with the sole aim to discredit Mujuru. The unnamed analysts who describe the attacks as comical are said to have “pooh-poohed the comical propaganda being spewed by the state media and ZANU PF opponents of Vice President Joice Mujuru”. These fictitious analysts are also used to counter the framing of the *Daily News* as one of the hostile tabloids fighting in Mujuru’s corner by *The Herald* by arguing that instead *The Herald* is;

Sinking so low, abusing its status as a state paper to report fiction as cover for obscenities from Grace while throwing all media ethics through the window. “*Mujuru attacks now comical: analysts*” (21/11/14).

The above quote is confirmation that indeed media ethics such as balance, truthfulness, impartiality and objectivity were not observed in the coverage of the Joice Mujuru and that *The Herald* was reporting fiction. All the counter accusations by the private newspapers such as the *Daily News* that *The Herald* was writing fiction on one hand, while on the other hand the

description of the *Daily News* as a hostile tabloid is both a confirmation that these newspapers were not abiding by the standards expected of serious broadsheet newspapers that they claim to be.

One of the analysts most extensively used by *Daily News* in the framing of Joice Mujuru, is Maxwell Saungweme who expressed shocking “sympathy” for the journalists who work for *The Herald* by saying that he feels;

... for these poor journalists at *The Herald* for they are endangering their careers by peddling outright lies and political hogwash just to please a First lady who everyone can see is failing to manage her delusions of grandeur “*Mujuru attacks now comical: analysts*”( 21/11/14).

Another extensively used analyst, Alex Magaisa, also described *The Herald* stories on Mujuru as smacking of cheap propaganda with calculated intent to tarnish her in the eyes of ZANU PF supporters by associating her with the MDC and therefore implying that Mujuru was a sell-out, a label that has been consistently applied on the MDC.

The victim frame is also brought through the treatment of Mujuru’s allies such as Nicholas Goche who is described in the story “*Mujuru, Goche in Politburo no show*” (27/11/14) as having quit the race to contest for a Central Committee post due to the ugly factional and succession wars in the party. In the story, it is said that Goche thus failed to submit his election papers after what were described as “hired thugs” who were baying for his blood and besieged a “tempestuous provincial meeting in Mashonaland Central whose scenes were described as either “hell or completely bewildering”. The fear of persecution of both Mujuru and her allies thus forced them not to attend the Politburo meeting before the congress because of the brutality that characterised their camp.

In clear sympathy with Mujuru as a victim of political machinations from ZANU PF political matadors, the *Daily News* in its editorial entitled “*Mugabe losing grip on Zanu PF* (01/12/14) demonstrated that she was a victim of much larger forces and therefore demands sympathy. The editorial noted that;

Mugabe has tacitly approved the barracking and humiliation of Mujuru by junior officials whose behaviour has been consistent with similar vituperative insults by Grace. Yet this behaviour is at odds with Mugabe’s earned role of being the glue that holds Zanu PF and Zimbabwe together. (01/12/14) p8.

From the above editorial, the portrayal of Mujuru as a victim becomes very clear because the most powerful person in the land is described as giving tacit approval for her to be attacked by his wife and all party members who are all junior to her as she was the second secretary of the

party. What, the above quote brings out is that that Mujuru is open and vulnerable to attack and therefore a victim of much bigger forces. Her being a victim is accentuated by the fact that she is a widow. This editorial, if read together with sentiments by former ZANU PF Mashonaland Central youth Chairperson Godfrey Tsenengamu in the story *“Mujuru ouster: Fresh details emerge”* (5/08/16) which claimed that the ouster of Mujuru was personally instigated by the president, one can conclude that indeed from a *Daily News* perspective Mujuru was a victim of political circumstances beyond the allegations levelled against her.

In further extension of the victim frame, Mujuru is also portrayed to be at the mercy of hired thugs in the story *“Hired thugs target Mujuru.....as hundreds are denied accreditation....comical Gomwe threatens Daily News”* (2/12/14). The youths are said to have been hired to heckle and embarrass Vice President Mujuru and her supporters at the congress. Also allegations of corruption and treason on Mujuru are described as a manufacturing of “lap dog and lickspittle state media controlled by hard-line party apparatchiks loyal to Mnangagwa” (2/12/14) p1-2.

The *Daily News* also sought to use the tragedies of other women as exemplars of what could befall Mujuru as in the story *“Thugs harass Sekeramayi wife”* (3/12/14) if she dared to attend the ZANU PF congress. In the story Sekeramayi’s wife was allegedly heckled, harassed and physically abused by what were described as rowdy youth at ZANU PF headquarters. And this harassment was described as an “ominous warning to embattled Vice President Joice Mujuru and all her senior party officials deemed to be sympathetic to her”. Furthermore, the youths were described as “agitated jobs who shamefully pushed, shoved and harangued Sekeramayi’s wife, a mother of seven children, in the full glare of journalists” (3/12/14). The implication is that if youths could harass a wife of a defence minister what worse atrocities can visit a defenceless widow like Joice Mujuru.

President Mugabe claimed that Mujuru used witchcraft on him in the story *“Mujuru used juju on me- Mugabe”* (4/12/14). This story reveals the gravity of the victim image of the widower. This frame becomes more complicated as it is reported in the *Daily News* that the most powerful person in the country expresses fear over her actions. In this light, Mujuru was thus vulnerable and her fate was in the hands of the president. It also meant that supporters of the president and ZANU PF would naturally hate her because she had become an enemy. The *Daily News* brought to the fore the victimhood in Mujuru by claiming in the lead paragraph of the story *“Mujuru used juju on me- Mugabe”* (4/12/14) that;

President Mugabe yesterday twisted the knife he has struck into the back of his embattled number two, Joice Mujuru by alleging she was so desperate to topple and succeed him to the extent of consulting N'angas (p1).

The above quote buttresses the fact that Mujuru was at the mercy of President Mugabe and only he could determine her political fate.

In a sustained bid to sympathise with Mujuru and portray her as a victim, the *Daily News* went overboard in printing sensational and screaming headlines such as “*I destroyed Mujuru: Grace...as Mugabe chants Pasi ne Zanu PF*” (7/12/14). The headline would make one think that First Lady Grace Mugabe said the actual words, when in fact she said that she wanted to bring her into line as she said;

I was given a whistle and like a whistle-blower, I blew it to whip people into line. Some thought I was out of tune, I realised that Mai Mujuru was off –side and I sent emissaries to advise her ‘Bhora pasi’ (calm down) but she never heeded my advice. She is like a dung beetle which wheels the ball backwards instead of forward. (7/12/14).

The deliberate publishing of misleading headlines exposes the unethical practices that border on half-truths, titillating information, innuendo and trash that are characteristic of attention seeking tabloids (Bird 1992, Sloan 2001).

Mujuru is further represented as a victim of very powerful forces which include the First lady and her husband. This is shown in the story “*Grace feud with Mujuru divides Zanu PF*” (10/12/14). The story “*Grace feud with Mujuru divides Zanu PF*” (10/12/14.) is also based on rumour and gossip as it relies on unnamed sources who merely speculates on the reasons for the non-attendance of the the burial of a national hero by Mujuru. The story says the First Lady Grace Mugabe vowed that she would not attend Lloyd Kotscho Dube’s burial at the National Heroes Acre lest Mujuru also attended.

The story “*Grace feud with Mujuru divides Zanu PF*” (10/12/14.) also alleges that Mujuru was part of the official programme but after learning that the First Lady did not want her she made a hasty retreat. Other stories that encapsulate the victim framing include “*Zanu PF terrorises Mujuru supporters 25/03/15, Mugabe, wife lying: Mujuru lashes First Family for persecuting “a poor widow” 24/11/15, Mujuru MP’s face the gun ....as Zanu PF purges them to slow down People First 28/01/16, Mujuru supporters homes razed down 28/01/16.*

In the story, *Mujuru followers get death threats.....but vow they won’t be intimidated* (25/11/15), supporters of Mujuru are portrayed as victims of ZANU PF violence and receiving death threats to stop political activities through harassment and stalking.

As the victim image of Mujuru is expanded, some war veterans who initially participated in the process that led to her expulsion but had changed their political minds, were also at the receiving end of the factional wars, showed sympathy for Mujuru. The war veterans described the attacks as “disgraceful, unwarranted and misguided”. The war veterans also questioned the negative framing of Mujuru by the state media after she was hounded of the party arguing that “no one in ZANU PF is clean because once you leave, you become an enemy” (25/11/15). The roping in of war veterans by the *Daily News* could mean that they are probably the only force that government fears. It could also be that war veterans were siding with one of their own who was at the warfront like the old generation that fought the war from the prison or that the *Daily News* is deliberately creating Mujuru’s political future around war veterans. In other words, the newspaper is campaigning for Mujuru, urging her to form her own party, which she eventually did.

### **5.3 Brave and shrewd leader frame**

One aspect of the *Daily News* framing was to portray Joice Mujuru as a new, brave and formidable leader who could challenge President Mugabe in the political field. To bring out this perspective, the story “*Mujuru takes off gloves .... as she launches 2018 campaign Byo rally*” (4/06/16) will be analysed below.

# Mujuru takes off her gloves

... as she launches 2018 campaign with Byo rally



ZPF leader Joice Mujuru.

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**F**ORMER vice president and now leader of the Zimbabwe People's First (ZPF), Joice Mujuru, is finally hitting the campaign trail ahead of the much-anticipated 2018 national elections — beginning with a star rally scheduled for Stanley Square in Bulawayo on Saturday.

Her buoyant spokesperson, Gift Nyandoro, told the *Daily News* yesterday that the popular widow of the revered late liberation struggle icon, General Solomon Mujuru, had now completed putting together a comprehensive and countrywide political programme, as she bids to become Zimbabwe's first female leader by removing President Robert Mugabe from power in two years' time.

He said the programme included "the mother of the nation" meeting her supporters around the country and "offering practical solutions to the myriad economic challenges

Continued on P2

## Zim-Kuwait 'slaves' narrate horror tales

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SEVERAL young Zimbabwean women, who were recently rescued after being trafficked to Kuwait where they worked as slaves, yesterday recounted their harrowing tales.

The women, who could barely hold back their tears as they told of their trauma in the Persian Gulf country, narrated in horrifying detail how they had ended up as "household

slaves".

Still visibly shaken and speaking with palpable fear in their voices, the young ladies — whose names may still not be revealed — opened up somewhat to the media yesterday after much persuasion from Women and Gender minister Nyasha Chikwinya.

"We cried until we could cry no more. Up to now I can't fully say what happened ... slaves do not sleep in Kuwait," one of the women said.

Continued on P2





Figure 12

### 5.3.1 Words and symbols

The headline of the story “*Mujuru takes off gloves .... As she launches 2018 campaign Byo rally*” (4/06/16) is meant to depict a picture of a brave leader bracing for a fight to assume the position of president of the country. Taking “off gloves” denotes a determination to fight to the bitter end and amplifies Mujuru’s gallantry as a politician. The use of words “buoyant” and “hitting the campaign trail” also points to someone who is ready to go on and fight. The bravery



of Mujuru is also buttressed by linking her perceived popularity to the prowess of her late husband as the *Daily News* describes her as;

The popular widow of the revered late liberation struggle icon General Solomon Mujuru has now completed putting together a comprehensive and countrywide political programme as she bids to become Zimbabwe's first female leader by removing President Mugabe from power in two years' time (p1).

Mujuru is given the title “mother of the nation” who will offer practical solutions to the myriad of economic challenges that the country is facing. In this sense, Mujuru is presented as a brave leader prepared to confront all the challenges that the country is facing, both economic and political. As mother, she is likely going to give birth or ‘mother’ a new and possibly alternative narrative of the nation.

### **5.3.2 Preferred meanings**

The basic import - from the perspective the *Daily News* - of the story “*Mujuru takes off gloves .... As she launches 2018 campaign Byo rally*” (4/06/16) is to portray a brave and resolute leader in Mujuru who is presented as ready to challenge for power and take President Mugabe head on after being ousted from ZANU PF and government. The characterisation of Mujuru as a “mother of the nation” seeks to invoke the image of a caring and loving person. She is also portrayed as the person with the ultimate solutions to the socio-economic challenges facing the country in that;

Zimbabweans will get solutions from the future president of the country to all issues relating to their suffering, including the cash crisis, shortage of medicines in hospitals and the unacceptably high employment rate among other pressing issues.

The preferred meaning from this quote is that Mujuru is a saviour, a leader who has decided to lead from the front despite facing serious allegations of corruption and treason. Also the story “*Mujuru takes off gloves .... As she launches 2018 campaign Byo rally*” (4/06/16) is sympathetic to Mujuru by alleging that she was “hounded” out of the party and government on charges of plotting to assassinate Mugabe” and presents her as the solution that will rescue what are described as “long suffering Zimbabweans from ZANU PF”. A not-so-obvious preferred meaning is that patriarchal leaders have failed the people and therefore, that it is time for women to take over the mantle of power in Zimbabwe. The paradox of a mother-frame is that it implies a nourishing person on one hand, and deepens the idea of Mujuru in the victim frame because women are normally considered as soft targets.

### 5.3.3 Omission analysis

The story “*Mujuru takes off gloves .... As she launches 2018 campaign Byo rally*” (4/06/16) makes serious omissions in that it does not offer any meaningful proposals on how Mujuru will extricate Zimbabwe out of the current challenges except that she is the “solution”. The story suggests that Mujuru as an individual can solve the issues without assessing her capabilities. The headline implies that Mujuru is ready for a fight. It is exaggerated because the actual story is more inclined to justify her perceived reluctance to hold rallies after forming her political party. Instead of providing the details for the delay by Mujuru to announce her plans as a politician the *Daily News* offers justification that;

By moving to officially launch her campaign Mujuru has now snuffed discordant voices within her fledging party as well as snide remarks by her political competitors that ZPF had suffered a still birth because she was reluctant to take Mugabe head on for a number of reasons - including fear of being arrested on untested allegations of corruption that was allegedly committed while she was in government. (4/06/16)(p1).

The above quote demonstrates that the *Daily News* was at pains to show that Mujuru was a brave and calculative leader by inserting opinion to justify that. The *Daily News* resorted to editorialising to create the image of a brave Mujuru taking on Mugabe head on.

### 5.3.4 Limiting debate

The story “*Mujuru takes off gloves .... As she launches 2018 campaign Byo rally*” (4/06/16) turns out to be a public relations exercise to spruce Mujuru’s damaged political image. The *Daily News*’s sole intention was to justify her inaction and act as a platform to dispel allegations of friction in her (ZPF) party. In reality, Mujuru’s party does not suggest a robust political agenda to counter that of ZANU PF. The pre-occupation of Mujuru’s new party is to remove Mugabe as if that alone will guarantee economic freedom to the citizens. Another aspect of the story was to portray Mujuru as the solution to all the challenges that are facing the country without even offering how she will solve them. The danger of the story is that in focusing on Mujuru’s war credentials and political prowess as an individual, the newspapers is unwittingly creating a personality cult. The newspaper also uses the platform to speculate on the coalition between Tsvangirai and Mujuru and how it has caused what is described as;

... visible anxiety within Zanu PF which is ravaged by its seemingly unstoppable factional and succession wars that have seen embattled Vice President Emerson Mnangagwa come under increasing pressure- amid ruling party fears that the grand coalition could spell doom for Mugabe and his minions.(4/06/16)(p1).

The portrayal of Mujuru as a brave and shrewd leader runs through from the time she was in ZANU PF until she was expelled. She is framed as a brave and shrewd faction leader with depictions in headlines such as “*Mujuru hits back as Mnangagwa faction is walloped*” (11/08/14), where she is described as a force to reckon with after winning 8 out of 10 ZANU PF provinces in the Youth League elections.

The story “*Mujuru hits back as Mnangagwa faction is walloped*” (11/08/14) celebrates the win by Mujuru, noting that “Vice President Joice Mujuru emerged victorious from the 6<sup>th</sup> ZANU PF Youth League elections thoroughly walloping the enemies on Mnangagwa group”. The article brings out the bravery of Mujuru by claiming that she will beat even the First Lady Grace Mugabe who had then made a grand entry into the political field.

The entrance into politics of First Lady Grace Mugabe was viewed by many, including those from the Mnangagwa faction, as derailing Mujuru’s ascendancy to power but the Vice President hit back in brutal fashion as her candidates swept to victory “*Mujuru hit back as Mnangagwa faction is walloped*” (11/08/14) (p1).

The story’s headline has a big font and a large picture of Mujuru which is bigger than the article in typical tabloid technique (Bakkes 1999). The use of bigger fonts is meant to draw attention and has an element of exaggeration. Her bravery is also enhanced in the story “*Mujuru hits back*” (17/11/14) where she is described as taking the war to her ZANU PF and Government detractors by “rubbishing” claims of plotting to assassinate President Mugabe. The bravery is seen in her response to state media which she accused of running a campaign to discredit ZANU PF and senior state officials by stating that;

I deny any and all allegations of treason, corruption, incompetence and misuse of public office being routinely made against me in *The Herald* and *The Sunday Mail* newspapers and allegations by the First Lady that Mujuru is “unfit for consumption even by flies and dogs” (p1).

Some of the stories that show this bravery include “*Fresh crisis hit Zanu PF... as Mujuru piles pressure on Mugabe... Members ask who is in charge* (24/11/14). Stories which show Mujuru’s bravery are based on unnamed sources and rumours by, for example, saying that;

Harare’s rumour mill is also agog with speculation that Mugabe’s purge of senior party officials perceived to be loyal to Mujuru is what has led to the retirement of Clerk of Parliament Austin Zvoma (p1).

Another story that brings to the fore the bravery frame is one entitled “*Its game on.... As Mujuru ignores Mnangagwa, Khaya Moyo*” (8/12/14) where Mujuru is said to have cold-shouldered party bigwigs when she made a surprise visit to Stodart Hall in Mbare to pay homage to the late Lloyd Kotscho Dube. She is said to have “neither greeted senior government

nor party officials in the Hall. She left as quickly as she had come leaving them looking decidedly stunned and uneasy”.

In the story *Mujuru ignores Mnangagwa, Khaya Moyo*” (8/12/14) the *Daily News* portrays her as a fighter with the caption on her picture reading, “Still fighting”, but in contrast the unnamed analysts quoted in the story sought to describe her as not the fighting type with one of the sources noting that “I do not think she will put up a fight against Mugabe, she is young, there will be a political Lazarus in Mujuru just like there was a political Lazarus in 2004”.

Furthermore, statements by Mujuru in the press denying the allegations levelled against her are also described as either “hard hitting”, “spot on” or “guns blazing” which implies that she is a powerful individual. Her perceived power is also elaborated in the story “*Mujuru speaks out*” (9/12/14) where she is described as having aspects of a good and caring leader who will give practical tips to Zimbabweans;

There are a few practical truths that I must share which I appreciate all the time Zimbabweans are crying out for solutions to the simple problems we have which include how to put food on the table, how to obtain healthcare, sending our children to school, providing transport for them and restoring transport for them and restoring electricity to all urban households together with running water. It is these simple problems that I have dedicated my life and concern to and will continue to pursue. “*Mujuru speaks out*” (9/12/14).

In the above quotation the *Daily News* uncritically frames Mujuru as a saint who was not in any way involved in the problems that are bedevilling the country and in so doing it was more of doing public relations for her. As a brave leader, Mujuru is portrayed as someone who cannot be easily pushed out of ZANU PF and declares that she will die in the party in the story “*I will die in Zanu PF- Mujuru*” (11/12/14). The story “*I will die in Zanu PF- Mujuru*” (11/12/14) presents Mujuru as a poor widow who will die in the party as she has not known any other party in her life. However, her statements seem to contradict the bravery that the *Daily News* sought to bestow on her as she discounted herself as a fighter when asked on whether she will fight after being fired from the government by saying that;

I am not a fighting character. My background, I am a trained person, When you receive an order from your seniors, you carry it right through. If you had anything to question about that you find your way of questioning it.... And that is how we were taught in Zanla. That is how we were brought up in ZANU PF. (11/12/14) p 6.

As the *Daily News* sought to show a brave Mujuru standing out to Mugabe in the story “*Mujuru aims her guns at Mugabe*” (01/10/16), she is described as a “seething Zimbabwe People First leader savaging President Mugabe following an orgy of violence caused by “seemingly

deranged ruling party youths who left for dead four of her officials”. The words in the quotation is meant to demean ZANU PF while propping up Mujuru. The attack is also described as “satanic and demonic” especially from a leader who was coming from the United Nations talking about democracy yet his party was beating up people. Furthermore, the description of Mujuru as a brave leader is that she will attract ZANU PF members to follow her and thus the decision to fire her will backfire for the party. Such assertions were made by the *Daily News* based on mere speculation in order to boost her profile with sensational claims that;

... dozens of the party’s former leading lights and current officials are known to be consulting with People First. The Mujuru project is projected as very bright as people are sacrificing their jobs and an exodus of people are leaving the party.

The *Daily News* also relied on speculation that the “panicky” post-congress ZANU PF was making frantic preparations for yet more parliamentary by-elections after it emerged that dozens of the party’s legislators were holding meetings with Mujuru with the intention of joining her.

Also there was speculation of Mujuru joining forces with Tsvangirai, Mugabe’s nemesis. This comes out clearly in the story “*Zim political tension rises as Tsvangirai, Mujuru ratchet pressure on Mugabe*” (7/10/16) where the *Daily News* speculates that Mujuru and Tsvangirai will trigger early polls if they manage to withdraw 100 Mujuru-aligned members of parliament by resigning en masse. Such a move could force an early election, according to Parliamentary Standing Orders number 56 (1) and Section 137 of the constitution that provide that the Senate and National Assembly must have a minimum number of members present all time for them to conduct business.

The speculation of the withdrawal of 100 members of parliament is based on earlier speculation by the *Daily News* that “scores of post congress ZANU PF were contemplating jumping ship to join Mujuru’s People First project that is set to be launched into an opposition political party” (09/01/16).

To further build the bravery frame, the *Daily News* repeated the same speculative statements of Mujuru drawing members from ZANU PF in the story “*Mujuru winning Zanu PF battle ....as insiders say she has snared dozens of MPs from ruling party*” (09/01/16). As was the norm with the stories on Mujuru, the *Daily News* relied on unnamed sources to make such claims and her key allies such as Kudzai Mbudzi in campaigning for Mujuru. Mbudzi claimed that “There is an exodus of people joining our structures from all political parties on a daily basis and this is indicative of the faith Zimbabweans have in the leadership of

Mujuru”(09/01/16). Mbudzi also did not give the details to support the claim but the *Daily News* reported his statements as a matter of fact in an effort to portray Mujuru as a rising political giant.

The bravery frame is further buttressed by a build-up of stories such as “*ZANU PF loses more to Mujuru....as hordes of despondent followers ditch warring ruling party*” (15/01/16) in which the *Daily News* plagiarised the quotes used in the other story entitled “*Mujuru gains more ground....as she harvests Zanu PF officials, raids Makoni’s MKD*” (17/01/16). The above two stories which were written on two different days have a plagiarised statement which discredits the expulsion of Mujuru from ZANU PF, alleging that “The decision to purge Mujuru and her allies from the party in 2014 was a costly and monumental blunder”.

Another example of the disturbing trend of plagiarism by the *Daily News* in an effort to portray Mujuru as gaining more ground in the political field is also shown in the story “*Mujuru fishes in Zanu PF ponds*” (06/01/16) and “*Zanu PF loses more to Mujuru .....as hordes of despondent followers ditch warring ruling party*” (15/01/16). The two stories had a similar statement which read as follows;

The panicky post congress Zanu PF is also said to be making frantic preparations for yet more parliamentary by-elections after it emerged that dozens of the party’s legislators were holding meetings with Mujuru with the intention of joining her. Zanu PF insiders have said it was panic stations as many ruling party bigwigs who understand the fact that People First is a reality and a major threat to their futures ahead of 2018. Never mind the fake bravado that the chiefs (Senior party officials) mouth off at public platforms, it is panic stations in the party provinces particularly in Mashonaland East have been instructed to prepare for tough by elections for the MPs who want to ditch us. (pp1-2)

Plagiarism is a detestable form of writing and for news it becomes a more serious violation of journalistic ethics as the newspaper will be misleading the public by publishing fiction. Every news story is expected to present authentic sources to validate any claims but in the case of the *Daily News* it means the newspaper manufactured information to support a political ally. The net negative effect of the *Daily News* reportage is that the credibility of the information is doubtful and does not conform to the standards of broadsheet journalism. Plagiarism is a known tabloid journalism technique as tabloids just seek to trivialise and sensationalise facts.

Mujuru is also projected as a courageous and principled leader. In the story “*Mujuru turns down Zanu PF....and vows she will “never” go back to the party*” (7/02/16) she is compared to the Biblical Lot who was commanded by God to move out of Sodom and never turn back

lest he would turn into a heap of salt as she claims that “Like Lot I was told to get out of the party and never look back”.

By comparing her ouster as a command from God to leave the evil Sodom (ZANU PF Party) Mujuru counters the traitorous Judas Iscariot framing by *The Herald* and insinuates that she was not part of the rot in the party for the past 35 years and therefore is acceptable to the generality of the people. However, the *Daily News* stands accused of being uncritical in that at one point they sympathise with Mujuru for her sacking as a vulnerable widow but on one hand they try to build a courageous picture of her by failing to bring out the inconsistencies in her statements as earlier she said she will die in ZANU PF. It therefore follows that the *Daily News* cannot be relied upon if one wants to make a political decision as the newspaper just reproduces statements from politicians without any critical analysis. Readers need interpretation and analysis so that they can make informed decisions as the role of the press is to educate by effectively playing the watchdog role among other roles ascribed to it in society.

Furthermore, the *Daily News* sought to portray Mujuru as indispensable to ZANU PF by implying that her ouster was the reason for the implosion that continued in the party as she claimed that she was the glue that was holding it together by stating that;

Some people are telling me that I was the glue holding Zanu PF together because the moment I was sacked, the party imploded. The fact that the party imploded shows clearly that I was never the problem. Those that were accusing me of all sorts of things are the problem as long as they are there Zanu PF will continue to disintegrate. (7/02/16).

The story “*Mujuru turns down Zanu PF....and vows she will “never” go back to the party*” (7/02/16) also contradicts earlier claims that Mujuru walked out of ZANU PF and was not sacked.

Another disturbing trend by the *Daily News* is the unquestioned printing of political rhetoric in claiming that Mujuru was not fired from the ZANU PF party when in its previous issues it did confirm that she was expelled or hounded out of the party. In the story “*Mujuru turns down Zanu PF....and vows she will “never” go back to the ruling party*” (7/02/16) Mujuru confirmed that she was sacked from the party, a position she contradicts in the story “*Mugabe did not fire me.....says she chose to walk away from Zanu PF madness*” (29/02/16). In this case it becomes evident that the *Daily News* was content with printing sensation in order to grab the attention of the readers just like what tabloids do (Franklin 1997, Sparks 2000).

To find justification for its uncritical and inconsistent reporting, the *Daily News* expresses surprise on the claims by Mujuru that “I am the one who bade him (Mugabe) farewell. He did not expel me”. It reveals this sudden change of view by stating that “In a surprise revelation, former Vice President Joice Mujuru said at the weekend that contrary to the widely held belief that she had been fired from the warring ZANU PF party, she said she left on her own”. The *Daily News* was content not to interrogate these inconsistencies because it wanted to portray her as principled and courageous leader who is calculative and makes bold decisions. Again, the *Daily News* also reiterates the bravery of Mujuru and shows her as a flexible leader who is open to join forces to dislodge Mugabe from power for the good of the country, while bemoaning what it describes as her ruthless purge by a “totalitarian regime” as a “grave mistake” in the story “*Mujuru courts team Lacoste*” (17/03/16).

To further depict Mujuru as the leader of the future, the *Daily News* again resorted to sensational allegations that Mujuru was senior to Mugabe, in the story “*Mujuru senior to Mugabe – Mavhaire*” (17/06/16). The newspaper observes that Mugabe joined the struggle in 1976 when Mujuru had joined in 1972. The story also insinuates that Mujuru is a good leader and that Mugabe is old and cannot rule forever and that it’s Mujuru’s turn to rule. An expelled Mujuru ally Dzikamai Mavhaire said;

We gave him (Mugabe) the mantle to rule and now he is old, he is now an ancestor, and his wife tells us he will rule forever from the grave. Can we take that nonsense from Marujata (Marujata denotes an unstable, loose-tongued and divisive village woman in a famous Shona novel entitled *Garandichauya*). (17/03/16) p7.

While in this story the *Daily News* can be accused of sensationalism it may be the fact that the facts of the story are in themselves sensational (Örnebring and Jonsson 2004). This confirms some of the sentiments by some interviewees that the sacking of Mujuru was by nature sensational and the media did not create the sensationalism.

The expulsion of Mujuru and others from ZANU-PF was in itself dramatic and sensational, and the media did not create the sensationalism. The politicians did, of course with the aid of the media. At the material time Dr Mujuru was not forthcoming with an alternative voice to the saga, and her aides were equally reticent. This left the media to rely heavily on the side that was providing its views on Dr Mujuru. (Interview with ZANU PF activist on 22/02/17).

In further support of the brave leader frame, the *Daily News* resorted to editorialising in the story “*Mujuru to spill beans.....as she addresses ZPF rally in Harare today*” (25/06/16) by inserting an opinion in a news story to the effect that;



Her (Mujuru) threats to spill the beans on Mugabe and Zanu PF could set the cat among the pigeons amid indications late yesterday that this has already caused consternation within ruling party circles whose hardliners appear ever to derail her political career.

Furthermore, the story relies on a Mujuru ally and now spokesperson Jealousy Mawarire, who is given acres of space without opposing views, to make sensational and defamatory claims that the country is being run by a fool or that the leadership of the country is foolish by stating that;

The problems that we have are that we have foolish people presiding over this economy. The Bible in Proverbs says a foolish man dies whilst standing in his treasure, which is exactly what is happening in Zimbabwe. We are one of the richest countries in the world yet we are suffering..... our problems are made by one man who happens to be the president of this country. (25/06/16).

By allowing Mawarire to say these things on behalf of Mujuru, it therefore follows that the *Daily News* agreed that Mujuru was the solution to all the problems facing the country. The depiction of Mujuru as a brave leader in the story “*Zanu PF plots Mujuru demise*” (4/10/16) is also in line with the victim and sympathetic frames which portray her to be under siege from forces which want to ensure her demise because “her political star continues to rise and a panicking ZANU PF thus is determined to bring her down ahead of the 2018 elections” (p1). As with the other stories on Mujuru, unnamed sources or well-placed sources are the major sources of such stories even when they supply innocuous information which further raises doubts over their authenticity. The framing of Mujuru as a brave leader who can challenge ZANU PF for power seems to have been influenced by what one media scholar described as;

(the) sheer desire to get rid of ZANU PF at all costs. Zimbabweans are just tired of ZANU PF and anyone who can be a threat to the party, will get coverage. Furthermore, hegemony is a constant struggle. Therefore, this was also meant to portray the image of ZANU PF as evil. (Interview 20/02/17)

What the above assertions suggest is that the private media such as the *Daily News* blindly supports anyone who opposes ZANU PF to push the agenda of the newspapers and the material/ideological interests of its shareholders. However, the *Daily News* does so without any critical analysis, which could mean that citizens are not taken seriously and will not gain much from the media. The *Daily News* becomes both a player and an observer at the same time. This then compromises the watchdog role of the media. In light of this, it can be argued that the media is setting an agenda of trying to resuscitate ‘dying’ opposition politics by creating a political giant in Mujuru without looking at what she can offer to Zimbabweans.

## 5.4 Mature leader frame

In this symbolical frame, Mujuru is portrayed as a moderate and mature leader with qualities that show both, experience, maturity, moderation, reconciliatory and a developmental disposition and therefore worth considering as a viable opposition leader. This frame makes effective use of comparison of Mujuru and her nemesis First Lady Grace Mugabe who despite being powerful is depicted as someone who still has a lot to learn from Mujuru. To bring out this frame, the story “*Mujuru shows Grace the way.....as politburo members weep for VP*” (27/10/14) below will be analysed.

# Mujuru shows Grace the way

## ... as politburo members weep for VP

**Fungi Kwaramba**  
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**V**ICE President Joice Mujuru's measured response to the recent savage attacks on her by First Lady Grace Mugabe at her weekend graduation party in Mt Darwin has won her high praise from analysts who say this is the way senior Zanu PF officials should behave as the party's factional and succession wars continue to escalate.

This rare compliment for an active Zimbabwean politician from the normally hard-to-please community of local analysts comes amid revelations of emotional and heart-rending scenes that were observed ahead of Zanu PF's tense politburo meeting in Harare on Friday.

Impeccable sources told the

*Daily News* yesterday that many of her supporters, comprising senior Zanu PF members, wept uncontrollably when they met with Mujuru at the party's headquarters before the politburo meeting commenced.

"I've never seen anything like this in my whole life. Politburo members that included grown, battle-hardened men were weeping like children in sympathy with the VP and because of the pain of the persecution that Mai Mujuru is taking at the moment.

"Although I, myself, didn't cry, we all couldn't understand why the VP was being attacked this viciously by her enemies in the party.

"To add to everyone's pain, the VP herself remained very dignified throughout this emotional period and urged everyone to remain calm and not to worry. It was very sad.

"The crying was spontaneous and obviously the attacks revived memories of the VP's husband, general Solomon Mujuru whom we all know died mysteriously," one of the sources said.

Although the stage was temptingly ripe for Mujuru to respond in kind, and possibly even hit back with respect to Grace's recent sensational allegations of corruption and incompetence against her, President Robert Mugabe's deputy was calm and collected when she addressed thousands of her supporters from around the country at her graduation party, where she called for unity.

And where her adversaries religiously chanted provocative slogans at Grace's recent rallies such as "*Pasi neGamatox*" (Down with Gamatoto), a loaded statement aimed at rubbishing her and her lieutenants, Mujuru refused to be baited even when her supporters chanted the equally derogatory "*Pasi nezvi-jhukuto*" (Down with weevils) slogan in revenge.

Instead, she focused her brief speech on party and national unity, as well as the critical need to support and educate girl children.

This surprised many people, including both her political rivals and analysts — more so as it is understood that her party opponents continue to plot her downfall, by working clandestinely to ensure that all the party's chairpersons who are loyal to her are expelled before Zanu PF's much-anticipated elective congress slated for early December.

Analyst Maxwell Saungweme said Mujuru was behaving honourably because she was



Continued on: P2

VICE PRESIDENT JOICE MUJURU



Figure 13

### 5.4.1 Words and symbols

The story “*Mujuru shows Grace the way.....as politburo members weep for VP*” (27/10/14) portrays Mujuru as a mature political leader mainly in comparison with First Lady Grace Mugabe especially in light of her public attacks on Mujuru. By not responding to these attacks Mujuru is described as presenting a “measured response” and resultantly winning praise for that. As a mature leader, many of her politburo members are said to have openly wept for her in sympathy. To buttress the maturity of Mujuru as a leader she is said to have remained “very dignified throughout the emotional period urging everyone to remain calm”. To further show that Mujuru is a more composed and mature leader the *Daily News* identifies First Lady Grace Mugabe by her first name Grace in all the stories while Mujuru is described using superlatives such as the popular widow of the late liberation struggle icon or as Vice President Joice Mujuru. As a mature leader, Mujuru is presented as having resisted the tempting stage at her graduation party to respond to what is described as Grace’s;

... recent sensational allegations of corruption and incompetence against her... president Mugabe’s deputy was calm and collected when she addressed thousands of her supporters from around the country at her graduation party when she called for unity. (27/10/14).

Thus for remaining calm Mujuru was described as a mature leader in comparison with the First Lady because Mujuru was not “a novice in politics” and understands how issues and differences are dealt with in ZANU PF. The story “*Mujuru shows Grace the way.....as politburo members weep for VP*” (27/10/14) limited debate and the role of the media as a

market place for ideas by presenting one version of the issue. Its main purpose was to show that Mujuru is a more mature leader than Grace Mugabe and that readers should sympathise with Mujuru without interrogating some of her alleged weaknesses. Furthermore, her maturity as a leader is shown only in comparison with the public statements by Grace Mugabe and thus limiting debate on what kind of a person Mujuru is, especially one who wants to be the leader of the country in the future.

The mature leader frame is also built around stories such as “*Grace should slow down*” (11/08/14) where Grace as a novice, is urged to learn more from Mujuru in the political field because Mujuru rarely openly attacked other political personalities within or outside her party. Grace is described as an immature politician who arrogantly spits venom at imagined opponents whenever she addresses gatherings.

To buttress the maturity of Mujuru’s leadership, the *Daily News* in the story “*Mujuru defence “spot” on* (18/11/14) again praised Mujuru for responding to all the allegations against her in a timely manner and this is described as a sign that she has weathered the storm.

Through the use of unnamed sources, the *Daily News* also sought to paint a picture of Mujuru as a fearless leader who is determined to overcome the attacks from Grace Mugabe with the story “*I’ll never surrender: Mujuru ...supporters chant “Pasi nezvipfukuto”* (26/11/14). The story appears on the second page with the first page splashed with a big picture of Mujuru in typical tabloid format (Bakkes 1999).

To show the bravery and determination and unquestioned maturity in Mujuru, the same story “*I’ll never surrender: Mujuru ...supporters chant “Pasi nezvipfukuto”* (26/11/14) reported that she confronted Mugabe over the attacks and Mugabe did not agree with the “shellacking” of Mujuru. By holding her graduation party at a time she was facing the attacks from Grace Mugabe, Mujuru was described as exhibiting signs she had weathered the “vicious onslaught on her by Grace and her faction at least for now” (26/11/14).

Stories in the mature leader frame are consistent with the *Daily News* sympathetic framing of Mujuru which relied on her party spokespersons such as the late Kudzai Mbudzi and Jealousy Mawarire to give favourable comments on Mujuru with the paper being uncritical in its approach, thereby clearly supporting Mujuru by performing a public relations job for her.

Mbudzi was given acres of space to present Mujuru as a genuine reconciler capable of correcting all the mistakes done by ZANU PF since independence such as the Gukurahundi

atrocities in the early years of independence. In the stories “*Mujuru will act on Gukurahundi*” .....*People First* vows as party’s official launch beckons” (14/11/15) and “*Mujuru searches for Gukurahundi solution*” (5/02/16) Mujuru is described as one who can promote genuine reconciliation and national healing and rehabilitate perpetrators of political violence. Mujuru, who is presented as a moderate and concerned leader, refutes the statement by President Mugabe that what happened during Gukurahundi was a “moment of madness”, urging people to openly discuss the issue instead of dismissing Gukurahundi as “moment of madness”.

Also in another story “*Mujuru lays into Mugabe.....describes his Gukurahundi rants as “reckless”* (17/06/16), Mujuru who is described by the phrase “the popular widow of the late liberation struggle icon General Solomon Mujuru”, is portrayed as a dignified and diplomatic person in comparison with “the reckless Mugabe” who is not remorseful in the killing of 20 000 innocent civilians in Matabeleland and Midlands in the early 1980s. Mujuru’s comments are derived from a reaction to a story in *The Herald* where President Mugabe warned rebellious members of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA) who were perceived to be agitating for Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa to take over as president as tantamount to rebellion. Mugabe had warned the war veterans who were perceived to be agitating for Mnangagwa to take over about the potential dangers of such a move by arguing that;

The dissidents tried it, they were war veterans and you know what happened to them. Lots of trouble, lots of fighting, lots of suffering of course to our people and these dissident activities cannot be allowed, he thundered ominously. (17/06/16).

In response, Mujuru sought to openly acknowledge the Gukurahundi atrocities as a more mature leader by saying that;

It is on public record that people who were Zimbabwean citizens and civilians for that matter were killed, tortured and had their homes and properties destroyed by the notorious and infamous Fifth Brigade in and around Midlands and Matabeleland provinces – Mujuru chided Mugabe. “*Mujuru lays into Mugabe.....describes his Gukurahundi rants as “reckless”* (17/06/16).

In the story “*I will not revenge: Mujuru*” (7/08/16) the portrayal of Mujuru as a mature and moderate leader is also shown by the fact that despite her ouster and public humiliation she will not revenge in the event that she wins the 2018 elections. Mujuru also describes her time as vice president under President as more like she was in jail as she was not allowed to do her own projects by saying that;



“ Ukashanda nababa vakaita seivavo ijere pacharo) if you work with a man like Mugabe it is as if you’re in prison) “*I will not revenge: Mujuru*” (7/08/16).

The *Daily News* also failed to critique such statements especially from Mujuru who always referred to President Mugabe as her father and called ZANU PF her home and the complaints that she was hounded out of the party which is an indication that she enjoyed her time in government and as vice president. The *Daily News* seems to have been preoccupied by finding an alternative in Mujuru to the extent of just printing such statements without critical analysis and in the process short-changing readers by selling sensation. In line with the sympathetic and victim frame, Mujuru portrays herself as victim of Mugabe treachery by noting that the revelation by former ZANU PF Mashonaland youth leader Godfrey Tsenengamu that Mugabe was the author of her downfall as he coached the youths to attack her towards the party’s 2014 Congress reflects the work of God in that Tsenengamu exposed that ZANU PF did to expel her. It therefore follows that the *Daily News* was more interested in eliciting sympathy and inclined less to inform just like what tabloids do (Franklin 1997).

Another aspect of Mujuru depicted by the *Daily News* in the story “*Mujuru campaigns in Binga*” (20/08/16) is that of a saviour and development-oriented leader who initiated development projects in Binga when she was the vice president. She is thus portrayed as a being victimised for launching development projects. Mujuru claims that President Mugabe started the process of purging her in 2006 because she skipped his birthday party to launch projects in Binga. Again such claims are made by her spokesperson at the time Jealousy Mawarire who claims that;

It was in Binga where she (Mujuru) was nicknamed *Musungwazi* (the saviour) in 2010 by a group of chiefs after she started an irrigation project called Cross Dete which was meant to provide piped water for villagers and agricultural purposes.

By being referred to as saviour and a development leader, the *Daily News* sought to present her as a mature leader who cares about the people especially in marginalised areas like Binga and one who does not see any value in wasting lots of money in attending birthdays instead of providing basic necessities like piped water and ensuring food security.

However, the reliance of such stories on single sources and her party spokespersons do not add much value in terms of assessing the abilities of Mujuru as a politician, but what the *Daily News* was simply doing was praising her like an extension of her public relations department. The newspaper thus fails to contribute to an enlightened public sphere and is in no way different from the loads of unhelpful information churned out by tabloids as noted by Sparks (2000).

### 5.4.2 Preferred meanings

The story “*Mujuru shows Grace the way.....as politburo members weep for VP*” (27/10/14) is premised at drawing parallels between Joice Mujuru and Grace Mugabe with the intention of showing Mujuru as a leader with wisdom and maturity unlike Grace Mugabe who is described as calling people by their first names such “Chinotimba” and “Kaukonde”, instead of “Cde Chinotimba”. Mujuru is also described by political analysts as having handled the conflict in a very “mature manner” and as such Grace Mugabe should learn from the mature Mujuru and that “the whole thing shows that Grace still has a lot to learn from politicians like Mujuru and the earlier she does that the better, otherwise she does not have a promising political career”.

The sentiments in the quote above of a mature leader are also buttressed by another sympathetic analyst, Dewa Mavhinga who described Mujuru as a “seasoned and mature politician who responded with words of wisdom to unwarranted, childish and vitriolic attacks from First Lady Grace Mugabe”.

Another analyst, Alex Magaisa, casts the final verdict in the depiction of Mujuru as a mature leader by noting that;

She held back from attacking and instead chose to occupy a higher moral ground. She presents herself as a unifier, a humble character who admits weaknesses that afflict all human beings. She has refused to stoop low, to the levels to which Grace Mugabe wants her.

The above quote sums up the perceived dignified character who can hold the country together. As a mature person Mujuru is depicted as one who cannot be reduced to mudslinging politics. It is probable to speculate that Mujuru is presented as a mature leader in order to psyche ordinary people to accept her in her own right.

### 5.4.3 Omission analysis

The story “*Mujuru shows Grace the way.....as politburo members weep for VP*” (27/10/14) selectively uses analysts who heap praise on Mujuru for not responding to the public attacks by Grace Mugabe without counter views on why as a resolute politician as portrayed by the *Daily News* she did not respond timely. It is probable that Mujuru lacked the aptitude to respond and was hiding behind silence as cover for incompetence and indecisiveness. As was consistent with the *Daily News*, its analysis on Mujuru was blurred by the desire to project her positively and expose Grace Mugabe as unreasonable without querying whether Mujuru was guilty of the

allegations she was facing or not. The *Daily News* presumed Mujuru to be innocent and faultless.

#### **5.4.4 Limiting debate**

*Daily News* framing of Mujuru omitted discussions on the content of her political programme by only praising her without telling the other side. This includes presenting her as faultless and a messiah to the challenges facing the country. The *Daily News* could have interrogated some of the allegations of corruption levelled against her to convince readers that she could be trusted with power. Another flaw was failure to detect the authoritarianism associated with Mujuru which later manifested in the power struggles in the ZPF which later split with some of her allies like Rugare Gumbo deriding her leadership style as running a political party like a tuck-shop.

#### **5.5 Counter Framing**

The framing of Joice Mujuru by the *Daily News* was more inclined to counter the negative framing by *The Herald*. The fight over the expulsion of Mujuru from ZANU PF became a battleground between the two publications, with much disregard to media ethics and the need to offer meaningful debate to readers. To bring out the aspect of counter framing by the *Daily News* the story “*Mujuru opposed Makoni*” (21/11/14) will be analysed below.



# 'Mujuru opposed Makoni'

**Fungi Kwaramba**  
SENIOR WRITER  
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MAVAMBO/KUSILE/DAWN (MKD) founding member Fay Chung says Vice President Joice Mujuru had nothing to do with the formation of the Simba Makoni-led outfit, saying the two are actually "antagonists".

With First Lady Grace Mugabe and her backers implicating the widowed VP in the formation of MKD, a party that was formed by Makoni allegedly with the tacit approval of Mujuru's late husband Solomon, Chung said the allegations are patently false.

"We know very well that vice president Mujuru has never been close to Simba Makoni, in fact they were seriously antagonistic.

"I think it is totally untrue to say Mujuru was part of the people who formed Mavambo. In terms of (the late) General Mujuru, I do not have any proof at all that he was in any way involved in the formation of Mavambo," said Chung.

Hawks in Zanu PF who could not dare the powerful war commander Solomon, whose *nom de guerre* was Rex Nhongo when he was alive are now accusing his wife of having connived to ensure Zanu PF lost to the MDC in the 2008 elections.

But Chung said although she has no shred of evidence that Nhongo actively supported Makoni, she is aware that the fearless commander had turned into a fierce critic of President Robert Mugabe's populist policies.

Chung said she shared the same views with Mujuru when he opposed Mugabe's costly military intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1998.

"What I know is from 1998 onwards, General Mujuru was very active in criticising the President inside the politburo and in the central committee.

"He was saying very clearly that Mugabe should come up with a succession plan. He also supported Simba Makoni, who was in the central committee and the politburo.

"He supported Simba Makoni openly within Zanu PF, General Mujuru was very critical. He criticised our entry into the DRC," said Chung.

General Mujuru, who was widely regarded as the kingmaker in the ruling party circles, died under mysterious circumstances in 2011, and although an inquest into his death ruled out any foul play, his relatives remain sceptical. His remains were found after an inferno at his Beatrice Farm house.

Joel Mujuru, brother to the late Solomon was quoted in the media last week claiming that the attacks on Joice show that the death of the decorated army commander was a hit job.

"The attacks they are making on Teurai (VP Mujuru) are beginning to tell the story of my brother's death.

"I am not saying they killed him, but what is happening today points to that. It shows that everything was planned," he said.

In Zanu PF, it was only General Mujuru, who had the temerity and spine to challenge the 90-year-old Mugabe and observers say his death has given his opponents arsenal to attack his sprawling business and political empire.

Chung said Mavambo was formed because of the muzzling of all dissenting voices in the ruling party and a whittling democratic space.

"I helped Mavambo. Why did I join Simba Makoni? Because I feel during the liberation struggle in the 1970s and 1980s we were allowed to criticise in a positive manner what was happening in the party, I think that was the reason for our success.

"We were able to speak out. As we went along around 2000 it became difficult to ever criticise the leadership. If you criticised, they would say you are disloyal and anti-Zimbabwe and anti-party, this is the problem," said Chung.

The ever critical and independent General Mujuru, according to Chung, also opposed the Zanu PF socialist code of conduct in 1980.

"He criticised the leadership code in 1980, which was never implemented and one of the reasons it was never implemented was because General Mujuru opposed it.

"General Mujuru was against the code for instance where it said no leader was allowed to own more than 100 acres of land. The limit was 50 hectares, now everybody who is in power owns more than that."

**Figure 14**

## 5.5.1 Words and Symbols

The story "*Mujuru opposed Makoni*" (21/11/14) employs one of Mavambo Kusile Dawn (MKD) founding members Fay Chung to distance Joice Mujuru and her late husband Solomon from the allegations by First Lady Grace Mugabe that opposition political parties such as MDC-T and MKD were formed with tacit approval of the Mujurus and more specifically in their house. Chung disputes this claim by arguing that Solomon Mujuru and MKD leader Simba Makoni were "antagonists" arguing that;

We know very well that Vice President Mujuru has never been close to Simba Makoni. In fact, they were seriously antagonistic. I think it's totally untrue to say Mujuru was part of the people who formed Mavambo. In terms of the late General Mujuru, I do not have proof at all that he was in any way involved in the formation of Mavambo, Chung said.

These assertions by Chung are meant to exonerate Mujuru from the charges by the First Lady and expose the allegations as negative framing of Joice after the death of her husband since such remarks were not made when he was still alive.

### 5.5.2 Preferred meanings

The story "*Mujuru opposed Makoni*" (21/11/14) sought to clear Joice Mujuru from the allegations of aiding the formation of opposition political parties such as MKD and demonstrate that she was being victimised by the powerful forces in the ZANU PF party who are also described as "hawks" who dared not challenge General Mujuru when he was still alive but are now taking advantage of his vulnerable wife.

To amplify the link between the abuse of Joice, the story "*Mujuru opposed Makoni*" (21/11/14) also makes a connection of the accusation to the mysterious circumstances surrounding the death of General Mujuru and the attacks by First Lady on Mujuru with his elder brother Joel saying;

The attacks they are making on Teurai (VP Mujuru) are beginning to tell the story of my brother's death.....I am not saying they killed him but what is happening today points to that. It shows that everything was planned.

In its bid to construct the counter frame the *Daily News* also resorts to making sensational editorialised statements that;

In Zanu PF, it was only General Mujuru who had the temerity and spine to challenge the 90-year-old Mugabe and observers say his death has given his opponents arsenal to attack his sprawling business and political empire. (21/11/14).

The insertion of the above statement is done to show sympathy on Mujuru and portray her as a victim of the machinations of enemies in the ZANU PF party after the death of his husband. In all this the *Daily News* is implicitly urging Makoni and Mujuru to create a coalition of forces against ZANU PF. Further, by using Chung who is an insider of ZANU PF, the story's refutations is supposed to be authoritative. Again, Chung is also an outsider in ZANU PF as Rugare Jumbo's former wife, she is weighing in in support not only of Mujuru but of Gumbo, one of the founders of Zimbabwe People First.

### 5.5.3 Omission analysis

The story “*Mujuru opposed Makoni*” (21/11/14) failed to tell the exact aspects where Mujuru and Makoni differed so as to exonerate them from helping in the formation of opposition political parties but only stresses that the two were “antagonists”. From the story it appears that the two opposition political leaders shared a lot in common, especially being critical of the way ZANUPF was conducting itself, making it possible to speculate that they could have thought of forming a counter movement. Furthermore, the story does not tell readers that Makoni and Mujuru are related as Mujuru’s daughter Chipu is married to Makoni’s son.

### 5.5.4 Limiting debate

The story “*Mujuru opposed Makoni*” (21/11/14) could not offer much details to distance Makoni from Mujuru beyond the fact that Mujuru opposed Makoni without giving more information on where they differed. The use of Chung was only a way to show sympathy and exonerate Mujuru from the allegations by the First Lady. Also instead of bringing out the differences between Makoni and Mujuru, the story “*Mujuru opposed Makoni*” (21/11/14) concentrated on brushing aside the allegations by bringing the victim in Joice Mujuru. The story does not extend the debate beyond clearing Mujuru’s name.

Furthermore, the *Daily News* stories that sought to counter negative reports on Mujuru in *The Herald* include outright dismissals of all the allegations by First Lady Grace Mugabe that opposition parties Mavambo Kusile Dawn (MKD) and MDC were formed in Mujuru’s house. The story “*Grace is a liar*” (19/10/14) extensively quotes MDC spokesperson Douglas Mwonzora and MKD spokesperson Evans Sagamba to deny the allegations that MDK and MDC were formed in Mujuru’s house.

In the story “*Grace is a liar*” (19/10/14) Mwonzora described the allegations that MDC was formed in Mujuru’s house as utter rubbish;

It is absolutely rubbish. This is a wild accusation. MDC was not formed in a private place. The process that took place before the formation of MDC were held in public arenas. The idea was first mulled by ZCTU and then we had our National People’s Working Convention and other meetings ensued before the launch of MDC, so it’s wild for the First Lady to try and link the MDC to Mujuru. The party was a realisation that a black government can be oppressive just like a white government under Ian Smith.

Another counter frame was also extended to key Mujuru ally Ray Kaukonde who denied the allegations by the First Lady that he had changed his name and forged educational certificates

to get various jobs in the private and public sector. Kaukonde denied the allegations by stating that;

My mother died when I was young. I was brought up by my aunt. Is that a crime? I have never changed my name, why should I do that, my father is very much alive...I went to war at a very young age. I did not have any certificates to forge. Can you ask Zimsec or Cambridge to produce the forged papers? *"Grace is a liar"* (19/10/14).

In addition, the story *"Grace is a liar"* (19/10/14) is also written in an entertaining way which reproduces the alleged inappropriateness of Joice Mujuru's dressing by the First Lady by alleging that Mujuru was wearing skimpy clothes with her cellulite body in a meeting with men. Such descriptions are a typical diet of tabloids which concentrate on sleaze, sex and extensive descriptions (Bird 1992, Franklin 1997, Gripsrud 2000, Sparks 2000).

The *Daily News* also sought to clear Mujuru of some of the corruption charges, especially the allegations that she covered up the fatal accident involving her daughter Chipu Mujuru Makoni. The *Daily News* provided evidence to clear Mujuru of the allegations by seeking clarification from the police in the story *"Mujuru-Makoni fatal accident not covered up – Police"* (27/11/14). In the story *"Mujuru-Makoni fatal accident not covered up – Police"* (27/11/14) the Zimbabwe Republic Police's Assistant Commissioner Shelton Dube refutes the claims that the accident involving Mujuru Makoni has been "significantly altered" by the police. To buttress this point the *Daily News* provided evidence that the case was thoroughly investigated by quoting the police who exonerates Mujuru of the alleged abuse of power by stating that;

On 10 December 2012 Chipu Mujuru-Makoni was involved in a fatal accident along Enterprise Road opposite Harare Remand Prison. The scene was initially attended by Highlands National Traffic Post and a docket was later transferred to Mabvuku National Traffic section which is the mother station for comprehensive investigation. Mujuru-Makoni was charged for contravening Section 49 of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act Chapter 9:23 and convicted on two counts of Culpable Homicide to court, tried, convicted and sentenced as follows \$800 fine for each count in default to serve 12 monthly imprisonment and count 2 \$800 in default of payment of 12 months imprisonment. Furthermore, Makoni-Mujuru licence was endorsed with particulars of the offence and prohibited from driving for six months and that the Harare Magistrate court reference for the case is T01/5/14 and the court record book's number as 4783/14 *"Mujuru-Makoni fatal accident not covered up – Police"* (27/11/14).

The use of such details and figures though giving evidence to expose the sensational stories in *The Herald*. Such details also seek to provide a convincing narrative that Mujuru is being unfairly treated. In addition, the emphasis is also made very clear through the use of a blurb

which reinforced that the investigations were done comprehensively. The blurb emphasised the fact that;

The scene (accident) was initially attended by Highlands Traffic Post and the docket was later transferred to Mabvuku National Traffic Section which is the mother station for comprehensive investigations.

Also in the story “*Mujuru-Makoni fatal accident not covered up – Police*”( 27/11/14) the *Daily News* exposed the fake and sensational allegations in *The Herald* story entitled *Mujuru sucked in fatal scandal* (26/11/14) which alleged that the accident was covered up and not thoroughly investigated as Mujuru abused her powers as Vice President to protect her daughter. What this reveals is that *The Herald* was creating non-existent scandal to denigrate Mujuru. This could also confirm that there existed a faction that hijacked editorial control at *The Herald*. The hijacking of the editorial control was confirmed by one ZANU PF supporter who argued that some of the stories about Mujuru could have originated from forces external from the newsroom. In such cases and that ethical issues did not matter as the message was that Mujuru must go. He noted that;

The story was that Joice had to go and the reportage was supposed to be sensational and politics has always been characterised by tabloidisation. The Joice Mujuru story was meant to address the internal shenanigans of Zanu PF and *The Herald* was simply reporting what political actors said. Anonymous sources were mostly intelligence reports and as a result a by-line cannot be used Mujuru was removed from Zanu PF as a way of the ongoing realignment in the party and political allegations can be brought up whether true or false. When Simon Muzenda died people were supporting Mujuru and allegations were levelled on Mnangagwa of trying to topple President Mugabe and Mujuru benefitted from such lies and there was no need for Mujuru to cry victim. The president was now afraid of the political aspirations of Mujuru who was encouraged to look further than being Vice President in 2004 (*Interview 10/05/17*).

The story “*Mujuru-Makoni fatal accident not covered up – Police*”( 27/11/14 is a typical example of a balanced story which uses authentic sources such as the police and provides the evidence in the forms of figures, dates, names of people and confirmation by the police to demonstrate the credibility of a news story. What the story “*Mujuru-Makoni fatal accident not covered up – Police*” (27/11/14 shows is that when the *Daily News* publishes stories with anonymous sources the stories are pure fiction.

In addition, the story “*Mujuru-Makoni fatal accident not covered up – Police*”( 27/11/14) dismisses the sensational allegations by First Lady Grace Mugabe that Ray Kaukonde forged his educational certificates to secure various jobs since 1980, by interviewing the alleged victim

of the certificates Ray Michael Tapuwa Chimbanga who refuted reports arguing that he never lost his certificates. Expressing his surprise at the allegations Chimbanga said;

I was surprised to hear this scandal in *The Sunday Mail* when the truth is that my “O” level certificates have never gone missing when they visited my homestead last week, I showed them my original “O” level certificates and so I am surprised where all this noise is coming from. “*Mujuru-Makoni fatal accident not covered up – Police*” (27/11/14).

To show further support for Mujuru, the *Daily News* also added a statement in the story that;

As the alleged scandal has confirmed a worrying trend in Zanu PF where those perceived to be Vice President Joice Mujuru allies are on the receiving end of various hatchet jobs, it turns out that Kaukonde never worked for the police and education ministries “*Mujuru-Makoni fatal accident not covered up – Police*” (27/11/14).

From the above statement it is clear that the *Daily News* was sympathising with Mujuru and portraying her as a victim together with her allies and that the allegations were well calculated endeavours to ensure their demise. This is confirmed by the use of such phrases like “various hatchet jobs”.

Through the use of attention getting headlines such as “*They are mad, Mujuru charges*” (26/03/15) the *Daily News* dismisses the allegations that Mujuru was working with opposition political parties, prominent Zimbabweans and foreign governments to plunge the country into unprecedented chaos in a bid to trigger early polls. In writing the story the *Daily News* inserted opinion that the;

. . . murky claims are far-fetched and fit for Bollywood skits is the latest in a long line of widely-discredited allegations ranging from treason to witchcraft – that President Robert Mugabe and his wife Grace and Zanu PF hardliners have made against her and that lickspittle state media has carried with glee over the past few months(26/03/15).(p1)

The *Daily News* also questions why police have not either charged or arrested Mujuru over the serious allegations. Ironically, the *Daily News*, which is itself guilty of using predominantly unnamed sources, accuses *The Herald* of the same by alleging that;

Typically quoting unnamed sources on stories of this nature, the lickspittle state media have claimed that Mujuru and her allies were working with the MDC, foreign governments and civic society to destabilise the country. (26/03/15).

In trying to exhibit its support for Mujuru and dismiss the simplistic framing, the *Daily News* in the story “*Mugabe under fire over VP comments*” (8/12/14) portrayed the attack on Mujuru as an attack on all women. The story “*Mugabe under fire over VP comments*” (8/12/14) uses

Mugabe critic and war veteran Margaret Dongo to point out that Mugabe belittled all women as second rate citizens by expressing lack of confidence in them. Dongo describes the statement by President Mugabe that Mujuru was a simplistic thinker as retrogressive for all women by alleging that;

He (Mugabe) wanted Joice Mujuru to remain a Vice President, there was no room to take over. This is dangerous coming from a head of state... I pity the women who worship the president and ululate every time he says something. This is so demeaning to the women and to make matters worse they would be wearing regalia with his face. (8/12/14).

In the above quote, the *Daily News* also sought to sympathise with Mujuru and expose the way in which Mugabe belittles all women and to counter the simplistic framing of Mujuru by *The Herald*. By portraying the attack on Mujuru as an attack and show of lack of confidence in all women, the story “*Mugabe under fire over VP comments*” (8/12/14) also implies Mujuru is better off from a leader who is cynical about what women can do in society.

In counter framing the depiction of Mujuru in *The Herald*, the *Daily News* sought to give her an alternative platform and the expectation was that the *Daily News* would seek to explain in more detail the issues that concerned her. However, some respondents are of the view that the *Daily News* simply reacted to what *The Herald* had written without being critical and aiding the public to get a full picture of what was going on. The counter frame thus failed to provide useful alternative information because it resorted to personification which does not lead readers to develop an understanding of the whole issue as noted by one freelance journalist who argued that;

The *Daily News* attempted to give Joice Mujuru an alternative space but they failed to give a fair analysis of the character of Mujuru, giving the merits and demerits of her as a politician or the issues that she was accused of but simply reacted to what *The Herald* was writing about her. The alternative version from the *Daily News* was sensational without analysis of the issues. The *Daily News* did not move beyond portraying Mujuru as a victim who had fallen into in the trap of enemies in her party but did not really bring out her real position. The uncritical stance could have been influenced by the stance dictated by the owners of the papers which was basically to put words in her mouth, build her image, sell her to the public as a serious political candidate who could take Zimbabwe out of the current troubles. (Interview 05/05/17).

Furthermore, the failure of the media to tackle critical issues by focussing on personalities was attributed to the corruption and bribery that has become deeply entrenched in the media sector with most journalists now compromised and thus resorting to trivialising important issues (Interview 05/05/17).

## 5.6 Grand Coalition frame

Another frame employed by the *Daily News* was to push an agenda of a grand coalition of opposition political parties which would dislodge Mugabe from power. The grand coalition frame is built around the possibility of a coalition of all political parties led by either Joice Mujuru or Morgan Tsvangirai. In the grand coalition, Mujuru was envisaged to make up for the deficiencies in Tsvangirai who has no liberation war credentials.

To bring out this frame the story “*Tsvangirai, Mujuru present formidable coalition*” (17/08/16) will be analysed.



Maxwell Sibanda  
COMMUNITY ISSUES

# Tsvangirai, Mujuru present formidable coalition

**T**HE recent solidarity pact between MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai and Zimbabwe People First's Joice Mujuru as they led demonstrations in Gweru was by any measure groundbreaking and the shockwaves are evidently resonating within Zanu PF, political and social commentators contend.

The commentators said what Zimbabweans need is a genuine coalition and not the so-called coalitions which are simply a rat race towards power.

They are also of the feeling that the opposition has to step up its capacity to drag the ruling party to start effecting electoral reforms.

Political commentator Phillip Pasirayi said it was important the opposition parties have found each other. "A divided opposition will only work to Zanu PF's advantage. But let me say that it's too early to talk of a coalition as there are many hurdles on the way."

"The opposition parties need to bury their differences and embrace the spirit of accommodation and work for the common good."

Pasirayi said the opposition also needs to understand that Zanu PF is working round the clock to scuttle the coalition.

"Part of the Zanu PF strategy is to foment divisions within the opposition parties, co-opt a few corrupt leaders and even form bogus opposition parties which have already started just to muddy the waters."

"The other strategy that will be used against the opposition parties to scuttle the coalition is to play dirty and use the State media to frame Mujuru and Tsvangirai as ideologically bankrupt and stooges of Britain and America."

Pasirayi added that the main opposition parties are advised to guard against infiltration by "CIOs and if they embrace some of the small parties that are mushrooming that is a recipe for disaster. Some of the parties that look genuine on paper are Zanu PF projects."

Journalist Tonderai Kwindi said any coalition should be informed by the people's interests and should never be about the politicians.

"The Mujuru and Tsvangirai 'pact' will give hope to a troubled nation because she (Mujuru) will help ward off propaganda fears among some electorate that Tsvangirai has no liberation credentials."

"The coalition should be one of those willing to serve the people not prising political positions for themselves," said Kwindi.

He added that what Zimbabweans need is a genuine coalition with the will power to usher in a completely new era of politics in the country where people's rights are respected. "For now most of these so-called coalitions are simply a rat race towards power."

MDC spokesperson Obert Gutu said negotiating for political party coalitions is like cutting deals for smart business partnerships. "There is always need for



MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai and Zimbabwe People First leader Joice Mujuru at a rally in Gweru recently.

a thorough due diligence exercise to be conducted. A grand political coalition is on the horizon; it's coming. That's for sure.

"That's why the Zanu PF regime is at sixes and sevens. The regime is in panic mode. But then, a new Zimbabwe is beckoning. No one can stop that process now. Just watch this space."

Media practitioner Raswat Mukundu said coalitions need a meeting of minds and realism on leadership capacity as well as humility of those involved as one will assume the top seat at the expense of the other.

"The MDC and ZPF present a formidable coalition without the need for other smaller if not inconsequential parties."

"However, the question is what is the coalition for, is it to simply grab power, what alternatives are the two offering? Their success or failure depends on how they answer this question," said Mukundu.

Political activist Tabani Moyo said the opposition political parties' coming together is a first step towards dismantling Mugabe's 36-year stranglehold on Zimbabwe.

"However, getting together alone is not enough unless if they are nourished of the capacity to fireproof the administration of the

elections. There has been electoral fraud taking place for the better part of Mugabe's three-and-a-half-decade rule," said Moyo.

He added that the opposition in totality has to step up its capacity to drag the ruling party to start effecting reforms and become competitive in the next general elections.

"In essence the opposition should start believing in itself once again and build capacity to wrestle for political power, rather than focusing on internal corrosion as in the current debilitating state," said Moyo.

Mining activist Farai Maguwu said this has to be a coalition of the willing. "In politics every vote counts. But my main concern is that the great question of the day will not be decided by popular vote but rather by the creation of an even electoral environment."

"I predict a heavy trouncing of the opposition, even if they all unite and present a single candidate in 2018, unless they fight very hard for genuine electoral reforms."

Political commentator McDonald Lewanika said events in Gweru were a good sign and gave both parties an opportunity to test temperatures, the leaders' chemistry and even Zanu PF reactions.

"So a good first step. But to form genuine coalitions photo ops (photo opportunity) alone are not enough; the parties would need to form exploratory committees to work out a plan for discussion, develop shared values and visions and create a platform to both have a conversation and determine what is shared and thrash out points of difference," said Lewanika.

He added that good photo ops like Gweru usually happen as part of a plan and are usually the tale signs that something is afoot but he was not sure if this is the case in Zimbabwe.

Lewanika said, "Zimbabwe has over 40 registered opposition parties and a grand coalition involving all of them may be impossible. But smaller coalitions may be preferable and within the realm of possibility as it is easier to match values and have manageable alliances when they are small to mid-sized, but some coalitions have been known to have more than 15 parties."

Playwright Silvanos Mudzova believes everyone should be in the pact. "No matter how small the political party is those few votes matter. The case of Zambia quickly comes to mind if they had combined forces Lungu would not have won."

"The way forward for this pact is political leadership should humble themselves and compromise on positions. The issue of positions must not stall this process and if leaders have people at heart surely they can accept any positions."

Media practitioner Nigel Nyamutumbu said the pact by Mujuru and Tsvangirai was by any measure groundbreaking and the shockwaves are evidently resonating within Zanu PF.

"For years, the ruling party has been benefiting from a fractured opposition, whose divisions would often defy logic and as such the coming together of these two prolific politicians has potential of becoming a game changer."

"Notably, Mujuru and Tsvangirai are beyond the prospects of an electoral pact coalescing to mobilise their supporters to demand electoral reforms and that could result in some changes within the electoral framework should they sustain the momentum," said Nyamutumbu.

He added that going forward, the negotiators of this grand coalition should focus more on building consensus on a common ideology and practical alternative policies that they can offer the electorate than petty positional politics.

Figure 15

### 5.6.1 Words and symbols

The story “*Tsvangirai, Mujuru present formidable coalition*” (17/08/16) sets the agenda for the need of a coalition between opposition political parties on the solidarity pact between MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai and ZPF leader Joice Mujuru by describing it as “ground-breaking” and one that will cause shockwaves in ZANU PF. The story “*Tsvangirai, Mujuru present formidable coalition*” (17/08/16) calls for the need of a “genuine” coalition by urging all opposition political parties to “bury their differences and embrace the spirit of accommodation and work for the common good” so that the coalition is informed by people’s interests. The coalition is also touted as one that will give hope to what is described as “a troubled nation because she (Mujuru) will help wade off propaganda fears among some electorate that Tsvangirai has no liberation credentials”. The *Daily News* thus sought to set the agenda for a grand coalition fronted by Tsvangirai and Mujuru which will wrestle power from Mugabe as the solution to the challenges facing the country.

### 5.6.2 Preferred meanings

The story “*Tsvangirai, Mujuru present formidable coalition*” (17/08/16) is meant to set the agenda for a possible coalition of Tsvangirai and Mujuru as the only option which opposition political will wrestle power from Mugabe. The story also issues possible warnings of negative framing that the coalition will get from the state media as a pre-emptive measure. In terms of composition, the story is well crafted with various analysts drawn from a wide section of society who offer their admiration of the coalition as the ultimate solution to Zimbabwe’s socio-economic and political challenges. The preferred meaning of the story is that Tsvangirai and Mujuru are the key players as they have the largest number of supporters as noted by one of the analyst who noted that; “The MDC and ZPF present a formidable coalition without the need for smaller if not inconsequential parties”.

Furthermore the coalition is presented as one that will send fear into Zanu PF in that;

A grand coalition is on the horizon, its coming. That’s for sure. That’s why the Zanu PF regime is in sixes and sevens. The regime is in panic mode. But then a new Zimbabwe is beckoning. No one can stop that process now. Just watch this space. (17/08/16).

The story “*Tsvangirai, Mujuru present formidable coalition*” (17/08/16) is very prescriptive on the type of coalition that is needed in Zimbabwe in that if the pact is to succeed, the leaders need to be humble and not jostle for power.

### 5.6.3 Omission analysis

The story “*Tsvangirai, Mujuru present formidable coalition*” (17/08/16) is one of the few stories published by the *Daily News* in its coverage of Joice Mujuru. The story “*Tsvangirai, Mujuru present formidable coalition*” (17/08/16) represents what has been missing in all other stories as there is exclusive use of named sources who debate on the proposed grand coalition. Perhaps the only missing aspect is that the story “*Tsvangirai, Mujuru present formidable coalition*” (17/08/16) did not include voices from ZANU PF, the party that is supposedly under threat from the proposed coalition and ordinary people who are the electorate. The story “*Tsvangirai, Mujuru present formidable coalition*” (17/08/16) sought to dwell more on analysts who, in principle are convinced that the coalition is the solution to the crisis in the country.

### 5.6.4 Limiting debate

The story “*Tsvangirai, Mujuru present formidable coalition*” (17/08/16) as mentioned earlier, widened the debate on the grand coalition by providing different perspectives, even by those who in principle agree on the need for a grand coalition. However, the debate could have further been widened if other voices of people who do not agree with the idea would have been factored in but as the *Daily News* sought to set the agenda it deliberately excluded divergent views as they would distort the agenda.

In making this frame the *Daily News* expressed an awareness that ZANU PF is capable of coming up with a strategy to scuttle the coalition and use the state media to frame Mujuru and Tsvangirai as ideologically bankrupt and stooges of the West, especially the United States of America and Britain

The agenda of a strong coalition is also touted to send ZANU PF packing in 2018 in the story “*Strong coalition will send Zanu PF packing in 2018*” (21/08/16). A coalition of Tsvangirai and Mujuru is described by the *Daily News* as very strong because it is made up of Tsvangirai who is “charismatic and hugely popular amongst ordinary Zimbabweans in both rural and urban areas” and Mujuru who is touted to have a ;

... very solid liberation struggle background in her own right and with considerable support in Mashonaland region and it goes without saying that a political coalition between Tsvangirai and Mujuru’s ZPF will give the faction-ridden Zanu PF party a very good run for its money in elections in 2018. (21/08/16).

The prospects of a grand coalition are also amplified through the letters to the editor. One such letter entitled “*Coalition: Wake up call for Zanu PF*” (17/08/16) envisages coalitions as a viable wake up call for ZANU PF and vital for dislodging incumbent regimes. The letter “*Coalition: Wake up call for Zanu PF*” (17/08/16) makes extensive use of examples to argue that political coalitions can be traced back to biblical times when the Medes and the Persians formed a political coalition under Cyrus II. After forming a political coalition the Medo-Persian Empire managed to defeat the Babylonian empire under Belshazzar in 539 B.C. Cyrus II was a Persian and Darius was from Mede.

The two kings formed an opposition coalition movement to overthrow the Babylonian empire which was the dominant super power at that time (Daniel 5 verses 28-31). By inference, it can be argued that Cyrus II and Darius represent Tsvangirai and Mujuru who can form a coalition to dislodge President Mugabe.

The letter “*Coalition: Wake up call for Zanu PF*” (17/08/16) also gives examples of 2002 where Kenyans voted out KANU party which had been in power for 39 years then led by Uhuru Kenyatta in favour of Mwai Kibaki of the National Rainbow Coalition and the 2012 victory by Macky Sail of Senegal who beat Abdouloulaye Wade in the presidential run-off after Sail had formed a coalition. The examples seem to show that ZANU PF can be defeated if such a coalition is formed.

The embracing of Mujuru as a political opposition leader by Tsvangirai is also used in the construction of the grand coalition frame in the story “*Mujuru one of us: Tsvangirai...says Mugabe will be “chicken feed” in 2018* (6/03/16). The story describes Tsvangirai as warming up to the idea of a coalition with Zimbabwe People First (ZPF) then led by Mujuru to deal with ZANU PF. Furthermore, Tsvangirai is described as a “battle-hardened” leader who in the process of welcoming Mujuru sanitises her from her dirty past with ZANU PF by saying that;

For me definitely they (Mujuru) and ZPF are not the enemy. They appeal to a certain constituency and are part of the opposition now. They are certainly not the problem. The problem has always been Zanu PF. So in terms of accepting their role and space in the struggle there is no issue there, there is nothing wrong with them. (06/03/16).

To back up the grand coalition frame, the *Daily News* uses analysts who argue that Mujuru, whose liberation struggle nom de guerre is Teurai Ropa (Spill blood) and whose husband was the first black post-independence army commander, could provide the much needed bridge that opposition parties have been missing to ensure the smooth transfer of power if they win

elections. The *Daily News* also stressed the fact that winning elections by the opposition parties in Zimbabwe will need a broad-based coalition involving all major opposition players because if they are not careful “Zanu PF will use its usual thuggish and foul methods to retain power in 2018”. “*Mujuru one of us: Tsvangirai...says Mugabe will be “chicken feed” in 2018* (6/03/16).p1-2.

The grand coalition frame is also portrayed as the only way to end Mugabe’s rule in the story “*Mugabe will fall, Mujuru predicts*” (01/01/17) which stated that the coalition will be in place by 2017. Through the use of unnamed sources the *Daily News* claimed that an agreement was there in principle and resorted to editorialising by inserting the statement that;

Analysts have consistently said that a united opposition fighting with one purpose would bring an end to Mugabe’s long rule especially at a time when the country’s economy is dying and all the increasingly frail nonagenarian is battling to keep his warring Zanu PF united. (01/01/17).

It also added that;

Since Mujuru joined with Tsvangirai and marched with him in the streets of Gweru in August last year... in a rare public display of unity among the opposition there have been growing calls by fed up citizens for the formation of a grand coalition”(01/01/17).

All these statements that were inserted by *Daily News* were aimed at setting the agenda for a possible coalition between Tsvangirai and Mujuru to dislodge Mugabe in the 2018 elections.

## **5.7 Implications of the *Daily News* framing of Joice Mujuru**

The framing of Mujuru by the *Daily News* showed that the newspaper is undergoing the process of tabloidisation in its presentation and writing of news. Content analysis findings and respondent views show that the *Daily News* employed tabloid reporting styles such as subjectivity, sensationalism, use of large photographs, prevalent use of anonymous sources, dynamic layout, cheapness, vulgarity, exaggeration, trivialisation, simplification, printing of unconfirmed gossip, speculation and personification in its coverage of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF. All these attributes point towards the damaging process of tabloidisation as defined by (Esser 1999, Bird 2000, Kurtz 1993, Turner 2004, Kalb 1997 and Bakkes 1999).

The overly sympathetic framing of Mujuru by the *Daily News* predisposed it to focusing more on eliciting sympathy for her as a victim and less to informing about the real issues which also amounted to depersonalisation and individualism by entirely focusing on her person instead of the issues at hand (Bird 2000, Bakkes 1999) or what Franklin (1997:8) describes as meant to

elicit the comment of a collective “Oh how dreadful from the readership”. Such attributes of the newspaper indeed demonstrate that it adopted tabloid rather than broadsheet journalism formatting and therefore confirming the argument that the *Daily News* is undergoing the process of tabloidisation (Bird 1992, Franklin 1997).

The depiction of Mujuru as a victim who needed sympathy was also a result of the polarity that exists in the Zimbabwean media which fixates public and private media organisations to just differ for the sake of it on any issue, especially those which are political. The end result is the trivialisation of the resultant issues. This tragedy, which leads to the impoverishment of the public sphere, is aptly summed up by one former editor who noted that for the private media;

It’s easier to sell her as a victim rather than a protagonist in the ZANU PF political saga. Indeed, ZANU PF had never treated a senior member in the way it treated Mujuru. Grace Mugabe herself is a hard sell; she is disliked almost by all and sundry, so her entry was received with scorn by the people. Private newspapers seem to be directed by what the majority of their readers feel about a subject and then report accordingly. This is again about polarisation. (*Interview 24/03/17*).

It, therefore, follows from the above quote that the media in Zimbabwe is moving away from serious issues towards what sells or what readers feel about a subject. These sentiments point towards sensational news which favours the exciting over the informational. A media critic notes that the media in Zimbabwe is gravitating towards tabloid journalism due to the cut-throat competition in a shrinking economy;

. . . the drive towards sensationalism is largely because of the need to capture the attention of the readers and possibly force them to buy the newspaper. The competition for readership has become so intense in an economy where the marginal propensity to spend is increasingly diminishing. So under such circumstances, news that titillates the mind, news that has been reported in a human interest manner is likely to earn a newspaper stable the readership. Hence the deliberate drive by the editors towards sensationalism, which unfortunately is fraught with its own ethical problems. (*Interview 07/03/17*).

From the above quote it, therefore, follows that the *Daily News*, whether by default or design, is undergoing the damaging process of tabloidisation. Tabloidisation by nature negates the efficient functioning of the mediated public sphere by working in opposition to the creation of general truths, general principles which would guide the formulation and implementation of the necessary regulation of social life (McNair 2001). Also by presenting mainly the predominantly sympathetic frames and failing to provide an alternative voice other than reacting to what *The Herald* would have written, the *Daily News* ended up using sensationalist



language and dynamic layout of using colour pages and graphics which led to the sidelining of the real issues in favour of political scandals thereby restricting the flow of information that would allow citizens to participate in meaningful political discourse, a point also noted by (Sparks 2000, Ornebring and Jonsson 2004). Some of the tabloid techniques that were utilised by the *Daily News* will be highlighted below.

### **5.7.1 Colour pages and pictures larger than the articles**

The *Daily News* employed tabloid reporting techniques such as the use of pictures which are larger than the actual news articles to draw attention of the readers through dynamic layout (Bakkes 1999, Schonbach 2000), for example in the story “*This Stinks, Zanu PF master of rigging, Plots to derail Mujuru* ( 13/08/14). The use of colour and pictures is also seen in the story “*Bloodbath in Zanu PF...at least 100 MPs face chop*” ( 15/11/14) which contains pictures of the ministers on the front page with the actual story on the second page. Other stories that use pictures larger than the articles include “*Mujuru hits back ... as Mnangagwa faction is walloped* (11/08/14).

### **5.7.2 Printing of speculation**

Newspapers are expected to enrich the public sphere by providing information that enables people to function as citizens and make informed decisions (Dahlgren 1995). Citizens are expected to obtain information that would have been gathered using known journalistic methods and as such newspapers should avoid printing speculation and gossip. In its bid to show sympathy for Mujuru and present her as a possible political alternative to Mugabe the *Daily News* resorted to writing stories for example in the story “*Axing Mujuru will backfire*” (14/11/14) was based on rumours and gossip in typical tabloid format by stating that;

Some legislators loyal to Mujuru have been whispering in quiet corners that they would engage in Bhora musango if the party’s elective congress next month decided to illegally strip the VP of her position in the party and government.

Another story that also relied on rumours is *Fresh crisis hit Zanu PF....as Mujuru piles pressure on Mugabe.....Members ask who is in charge?* (24/11/14) which openly stated that;

Harare’s rumour mill is agog with speculation that Mugabe’s purge of senior party officials perceived to be loyal to Mujuru is what has led to the “retirement” of the Clerk of Parliament Austin Zvoma. (24/11/14).

### 5.7.3 Misleading headlines

In a bid to sympathise with Mujuru, the *Daily News* also resorted to the use of misleading headlines, for example, in the story “*Chihuri dismiss resignation rumours*” (21/11/14). The story is also based on rumours emanating from social media that Police Commissioner General Augustine Chihuri had resigned from his post under pressure from what are described as ZANU PF “hawks” who were accusing him of belonging to a faction aligned to Vice President Mujuru. The story was misleading in that the headline implied that Chihuri had reacted to the story on the social media when in fact he did not even say anything. Instead the *Daily News* inserted a statement that “But Chihuri appeared to be under no pressure as he went about his duties accompanying Chief Justice Godfrey Chidyausiku in inspecting the parade”. The rest of the story was based on a speech by Chidyausiku and not on Chihuri thereby making the whole story a misleading one bent on trying to sympathise with Mujuru.

### 5.7.4 Editorialising

The *Daily News* extensively employed the detestable aspect of editorialising in a bid to show its sympathies for Mujuru. Adding opinion in a news story is a deplorable attribute and short-changes readers who are fed with personal opinion peddled as authentic facts. In the story “*Infighting destroying Zanu PF*” (7/12/14), the *Daily News* inserted opinion in a news article to the effect that; “Vice President Joice Mujuru and her allies have been under siege with hawks in the party pushing for their ouster on unsubstantiated allegations of plotting to assassinate Mugabe”. Also in the story “*Mujuru supporters home razed down*” (28/01/16), the *Daily News* inserted opinion to argue that Mujuru is so powerful and that a coalition with Tsvangirai will cause panic in ZANU PF by inserting the statement that;

The prospects of a grand coalition have also appeared to cause panic in the ruling party especially in Mashonaland East where Mujuru’s teams are reported to be destabilising the post congress Zanu PF structures with scores of members jumping ship to People First. (28/01/16).

Such information which is inserted in a news story is evidence that the *Daily News* was manufacturing information to support Mujuru or anyone who they thought would be an alternative to challenge for political power in the country from ZANU PF. The pressure to editorialise could have also been informed by the desire to prop up anyone who seemed to oppose Mugabe as one practising journalist noted that;

One of the disputed facts is that opposition politics is now dying in Zimbabwe. Even these papers have seen that the MDC is no longer strong as it is, so they now



try to shape the public to believe that the only person who can take Mugabe head on is Joice Mujuru. It's just an agenda of the media. (*Interview 20/02/17*)

### 5.7.5 Sensationalism

Another aspect of tabloid journalism is sensationalism where issues are blown out of proportion in order to attract and entertain readers albeit without making them knowledgeable on the subject matter. Sensationalism also leads to trivialisation and simplification of complex matters by presenting them in dramatic fashion. The aspect of sensationalism runs through the *Daily News* framing of Mujuru, motivated by the desire to give her a voice and in direct response to the negative framing by *The Herald* newspaper.

A typical example of sensational reporting by the *Daily News* is seen in the story “*They murdered my husband- - Mujuru... but denies to name the killers for now*” (23/02/16). The story is sensational in the sense that while it disregards the results of the public inquest into General Mujuru’s death which ruled out any foul play, the *Daily News* printed the sensational statements from Joice Mujuru but did not give the details as Joice simply said “I can’t say who did it, but the people in power know it, it will come out”. The headline implied to readers that the people who killed General Mujuru will be named but the story did not do so. Instead of telling the readers what the headline implied, the *Daily News* went into intricate details by interviewing General Mujuru’s elder brother Joel Mujuru who revealed details that the late General’s spirit will confront the killers. The inclusion of such emotional details cascades into the popular diet of news that titillates the mind such as astrology, unidentified flying objects (UFOs) which however does not lead to the full understanding of an issue at hand but simply excites (Bird 1992).

The level of sensationalism by the *Daily News* also reached crescendo levels with the newspaper making sensational comments of self-praise by portraying itself as the leading paper that was reporting accurately on Joice Mujuru when it stated in the story “*Mujuru turns down Zanu PF..... and vows she will never go back to the ruling party*” (07/02/16) that it was “the country’s leading daily which has consistently and accurately reported on the ugly goings on in the ruling party over the past few years”. Such self-praise is not desirable for a serious newspaper as it is readers and researchers who can make that judgement.

Sensationalism is a key attribute of a tabloid press and in the Zimbabwean setting the trend towards sensationalism has been largely due to the polarisation of the press along political lines as noted by one respondent who argued that;

The political scenario we find ourselves in in Zimbabwe is unique in the sense that there is too much polarisation which seems to have informed every other thing. Reporting in the newspapers has been greatly influenced by this polarisation. So the reporting on Mujuru has largely been that of sensationalism - all in a view to fulfil a set agenda. Hence, half-truths, conjectures and innuendos became the order of the day, as each side tried to fulfil their own objectives which are unfortunately set by other influential forces that are outside the newsroom structure. (*Interview 07/03/17*).

While polarisation has been identified as the main cause of sensationalism, one former *Standard* editor also noted that corruption, political interference, the need to maximise sales and the impact of online media competition has also led to the trend towards sensationalism by arguing that although;

Polarisation is the main cause but there is also a disturbing trend where journalists are indirectly under the directorship of powerful politicians. This is a result of a phenomenon called “brown-envelop” journalism. Because of the poor remuneration in the media industry, journalists are vulnerable to manipulation by politicians who give them more money than they earn from their jobs, thereby compromising them. Another driver of the trend towards sensationalism is the plummeting sales of newspapers as consumers migrate to online. To sell newspapers, sensationalism becomes one method of attracting readers. (*Interview 24/03/17*).

The heavy sensationalism exhibited by the papers through the use of unnamed sources and publishing of information that has not been corroborated by any source has deeply exposed slump in the standards of journalism. It appears that the papers have been “hit a cancerous desire to sell copy so as to sustain the economic instability ahead of publishing factual stories” (*Interview 29/03/17*)

## **5.8 Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter was to analyse the framing of the coverage of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF and government by the *Daily News* newspaper from October 2014 up to January 2017 when she had proved beyond doubt that she was now an opposition political party leader in Zimbabwe.

In coming up with the different frames as in the chapter, a representative story was selected for analysis to reveal the salient aspects of each frame using four categories namely; words and symbols - where an analysis of the article would reveal whether the framing is negative or positive, preferred meanings – which would reveal the intended meanings that the *Daily News* sought in the audience, omission analysis – where an analysis of what the framing could have

omitted or suppressed in the discourse of telling and finally limiting debate - where an analysis of what could have been left out in the story could either limit the debate in the way the framing was done. This chapter has demonstrated how the *Daily News* framed the expulsion of Joyce Mujuru from ZANU PF and the government by adopting an overall sympathetic framing which led to a blind support for her.

One of the reasons for such a blind support for Mujuru exposes the shortcomings of some of private media who just support anyone or party that opposes ZANU PF as noted by one journalist who said;

The extent to which the media has been polarised in Zimbabwe is what has created such reporting. The *Daily News* naturally takes a contrary position to that of *The Herald* deliberately. Hence even in the state that Joyce Mujuru's party is in, the papers still project it as a force to reckon with simply because it represents an establishment against ZANU PF. There is a tendency to applaud any political party which opposes ZANU PF even though they are yet to be tried and tested on the basis of just being against the status quo. (*Interview 27/02/17*).

However, a ZANU PF supporter, although agreeing that indeed the private media such as the *Daily News* sought to give portray Mujuru as a brave leader, outlined that their main aim was to celebrate a split in ZANU PF although dismissive of the picture of a Mujuru who can actually challenge ZANU PF from power by arguing that;

For these media houses (privately owned) Mujuru was the equivalent of the MDC split, a legitimisation of the concept of splitting parties. But more importantly here was someone with credentials that could square up with Mugabe's own liberation war record, someone who could be big enough to run away with half of ZANU-PF supporters. Clearly Zim-PF has had no muscle to threaten ZANU-PF, and the recent split of the outfit has given ZANU-PF a good reason for spiteful laughter. The Zim-PF meetings I have attended have made me to personally conclude that there is just no unity of purpose in that bitterness. People formed this party in unison of bitterness, and this has proven to be very hard to sustain (*Interview 22/02/17*).

The framing analysis of the articles revealed the following frames inductively sympathetic, victim, brave leader, mature leader, counter frame and grand coalition which however were not confined to a single story but intersected almost all the stories. All these frames are interconnected as they reinforced each other with overlapping aspects. The most common thread is that they served to sympathise with Mujuru as an unfortunate defenceless widow and victim of President Mugabe and his wife, especially after the death of her husband, and portray her as a political giant who could wrestle power from President Mugabe. Overall, the framing of Mujuru by the *Daily News* was a sympathetic one and is so doing the *Daily News* resorted

to tabloid styles in a bid to sympathise with her and concentrated on reacting to what *The Herald* was writing about her. Such an approach does not enrich the public sphere of rational debate and deviates from dictates of broadsheet journalism which demands critical analysis of issues.

All the frames employed by the *Daily News* did not conform to expected standards of a serious broadsheet newspaper because of the high level of sensationalisation and the employing of innuendo and anonymous sources which point towards tabloidisation (Sloan 2001), a point also noted by a media freedom advocacy activist who argued that the Zimbabwean media is still stuck in and characterised by;

... an era of 'unnamed sources' where in most of the cases one ended up believing that the unnamed sources where the journalists in the newsroom itself, gone was the age of journalism which quoted 'documents at hand' and exposes the vices of leadership failures and corruption. In certain stories you would be forgiven for thinking that it was just a bar talk that ended up at the front page of the paper. But as we noted in the IMPI report, the bulk of the citizens belief that the political story has reached its saturation and many people believe that it is doctored and have lost interest in it. Suffice to note that given the levels of political polarization, the papers have maintained the tabloid approach with the hope of pausing the moving target market and ensure that it remains a captive terrain. Unless if Morgan Tsvangirai, Joice Mujuru and Robert Mugabe do something extra-ordinary, they are not news given the challenges facing the audience.(Interview 06/03/17).

This chapter has also aptly demonstrated that the framing of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF and government by the *Daily News* was characterised by the use of tabloid formatting and styles such as the use of unidentified sources, sensational wording, colour pages with photographs larger than the pictures, attention-getting headlines, focussing on the individual rather than the subject matter, less weight on in-depth analysis and political debate. While the *Daily News* wanted to give the other side of Mujuru as opposed to what *The Herald* was writing about her the *Daily News* did not rise above just trying to oppose and thus failed to provide information that can enable citizens to make informed political decisions on what Mujuru has to offer as a politician. The evidence presented in this chapter thus confirms that indeed the *Daily News* is undergoing the damaging process of tabloidisation and its attendant consequences on democracy and the democratic expectations of the media in the creation of rational public sphere necessary for an enlightened and informed citizenry.

The next chapter will focus on the framing of the Mujuru issue by another privately owned newspaper - *NewsDay*. The focus will be to compare and contrast the frames and analyse

whether the framing also points towards the tabloidisation of political news or creates a new template for news reportage.

## **CHAPTER SIX: *NEWSDAY* FRAMING OF JOICE MUJURU**

### **6.0 Introduction**

The previous chapter focused on the representations of Joice Mujuru by the *Daily News*. The chapter argued that the *Daily News* framing was overly sympathetic leading to a blind support for Mujuru as a viable alternative to President Mugabe. This current chapter presents the analysis of the frames employed by *NewsDay* newspaper in the coverage of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF. The chapter assesses whether or not the framing employed tabloid news reporting techniques such as sensationalism, subjectivity, voyeurisms, and trivialisation among others. This chapter evaluates the nature and consequences of using tabloid techniques such as sensationalism and trivialisation in the coverage of serious political issues in the country.

An analysis of *NewsDay* articles from October 2014 to January 2017 reveals three main closely related, intersecting and reinforcing frames namely; moderate leader, sympathetic and victim frames. These frames occur in standalone stories although the same frames are detected, intersect and overlap in individual stories. The framing analysis is grounded in the critical works of (Goffman 1974, Entman 1993, Butler 2009). These scholars argue that framing is possible through the use of devices such as word choices, metaphors, exemplars, descriptions, arguments and visual images to deal with justifications, causes and consequences.

*NewsDay* is published by Alfa Media Holdings (AMH) which publishes two weekly newspapers. In the analysis of its coverage of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF, this chapter will be guided by the publicly stated AMH editorial principles in which it totally commits itself to delivering accurate and impartial news designed to inform the public debate and enable Zimbabweans to make educated choices. AMH also pledges to seek the truth, deliver facts and offer relevant context and analysis where appropriate. *NewsDay* will thus be judged by its publicly stated principles.

### **6.1 Moderate leader frame**

In the moderate leader frame, *NewsDay* presented Joice Mujuru as a viable political alternative to succeed President Mugabe. The attributes of a moderate leader connote a person who is amenable to growth of business and accepts western investment without any pre-conditions. In addition, the understanding from the *NewsDay* is that a moderate leader is presentable and acceptable to all Zimbabweans. Joice Mujuru was the second Secretary of ZANU PF, served

in various capacities in the ZANU PF led government for more than three decades and fought to be part of it until she was eventually pushed out. How these facts are fictionalised in the stories in *NewsDay* is what is interrogated in this section. The moderate frame is brought to the fore in the editorial comment “*Don’t be fooled by ZANU PF opportunists*” (19/11/14) which will be analysed below.

## Don’t be misled by Zanu PF opportunists

November 19, 2014 in [Columnists](#), [Opinion & Editorials](#)

There is a growing belief that the infighting in Zanu PF is a mortal war between the hawks and the doves.

### NewsDay Editorial

The argument, increasingly gaining currency, is that Vice-President Joice Mujuru is a moderate; therefore she leads the doves, while Justice minister Emmerson Mnangagwa is a radical and therefore leads the hawks.

The definitions of the word “moderate” and “radical” are interesting here. “Moderate” means someone who understands the importance of business and is amenable to working with anyone who would help promote the growth of business.

“Moderates” will accept Western investment without preconditions and will actually go out of their way to lure countries of the European Union and North America who have shunned doing business with Zimbabwe since the turn of the millennium. They are more capitalist than socialist.

“Radicals are steeped in nationalist socialist dogma. “Radicals” will continue to ape President Robert Mugabe’s pan-Africanist grandstanding, complete with its anti-Western, pro-East policies.

They will pursue Chinese investment to the exclusion of everyone else and therefore will perpetuate the country’s pariah status.

Zimbabweans, generally, the argument goes, are partial towards the West because of their historical ties with former coloniser Britain and are wary of China, the principal Eastern investor in Zimbabwe.

They argue that, because of this, Mujuru would have more popular support than Mnangagwa because of his perceived inclination towards the East.

Zimbabweans are also generally suspicious of the Chinese because of the perception created by cheap goods they have brought into the country and their poor workmanship on infrastructural projects — be they roads, stadia or buildings — they have erected and their relationship with labour.

The almost universal sympathy that Mujuru has garnered during her open persecution is therefore understandable in this context.

But it would seem the situation is nowhere near this. The fighting in Zanu PF is not ideological even in the crudest sense of the word.

It is a simple power-grab in the face of the rapidly fading grip on power of the nonagenarian President of the Republic, Mugabe.

True, Mujuru leads the richer half of the ruling party. Some of the ministers aligned to her are among the richest individuals in the country. She herself is said to have inherited a billion-dollar empire from her late husband Solomon Mujuru.

She also has bankers and white businesspeople behind her. This necessarily makes her and her followers conservative as they hope to preserve what they have managed to accumulate.

On the other hand, the Mnangagwa camp comprises a few rich people, that include him, while most of his lieutenants are pretenders either left behind in the rat-race of the past three decades or too young to have joined in it and would therefore wish to make up time lost by grabbing the reins of power.

Grace Mugabe's natural home — because of her huge estate — would therefore have been with Mujuru, but her impulsive rage against the VP is almost like a crime of passion. What is very clear in the fighting, however, is that it has nothing to do with the interests of the common people.

In the imminent post-Mugabe era, the people would still have to fight for their bread. Therefore, people should not be misled by the opportunists who have become the major protagonists in this drama.

Source - <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2014/11/19/dont-misled-zanu-pf-opportunists/>

**Figure 16**

### **6.1.1 Words and symbols**

*NewsDay* makes it abundantly clear in the editorial “*Don’t be misled by Zanu PF opportunists (19/11/14)*” that it believes that Joice Mujuru is its preferred leader who should succeed President Mugabe by singling her out for praise as a the leader for the future for Zimbabwe. The editorial describes Mujuru as a “moderate” leader, who leads a faction in ZANU PF which is described as the “doves” in comparison with Emerson Mnangagwa, a “radical” who leads the “hawks” who are contemptuously dismissed as outright opportunists.

A “dove” is a person who favours a policy of peace and negotiation and a “hawk” is a person who is in favour of an aggressive foreign policy. Through the use of the words “doves” for Mujuru and “hawks” for Mnangagwa, *NewsDay* makes it very clear on its sympathies and preferences for Joice Mujuru. *NewsDay* also makes it clear that Zimbabwean should prefer and



support a moderate leader like Mujuru. *NewsDay* seeks to influence readers through depicting Mujuru as leading “richer half of the ruling party” while denigrating Mnangagwa as leading a “few rich people” who are described as “pretenders”. The effect is that any reasonable person will want to be associated with Mujuru and not Mnangagwa.

As a dove, Mujuru is imaged as a moderate who understands the importance of business and is amenable to working with anyone who would help the growth of business. Furthermore moderates, as the editorial “*Don’t be misled by Zanu PF opportunists (19/11/14)*” argues, will accept Western investment without pre-conditions and will actually go out of their way to lure the European Union and North America who had shunned doing business with Zimbabwe since the turn of the millennium. Moderates led by Mujuru are thus capitalists and not socialists.

In contrast, the radicals are described as steeped in nationalist socialist dogma who will “continue to ape President Mugabe’s Pan Africanist grandstanding complete with its anti-Western, pro-East policies”. Radicals will pursue Chinese investment to the exclusion of everyone else and therefore will perpetuate the country’s pariah status.

The editorial “*Don’t be misled by Zanu PF opportunists (19/11/14)*” points out that Zimbabwe is more inclined to the West due to historical ties and expresses cynicism and disdain of Chinese investment which is alleged to have resulted in poor workmanship on infrastructural projects such as roads and stadia.

In addition, the editorial “*Don’t be misled by Zanu PF opportunists (19/11/14)*” also disputes the fact that Mujuru lacks ideological grounding or that she is ideologically bankrupt as suggested by the state-controlled newspaper *The Herald* . This newspaper argued that;

The fighting in Zanu PF is not ideological even in the crudest sense of the word. It is a simple power grab in the face of a rapidly fading grip on power of the nonagenarian President of the republic Mugabe.

On one hand, Mujuru is described as a leader of a billion dollar empire, comprising rich black and white people while on the other hand Mnangagwa leads pretenders who are only after quick rich schemes.

### **6.1.2 Preferred meanings**

The editorial “*Don’t be misled by Zanu PF opportunists (19/11/14)*” makes it very clear that *NewsDay* prefers Mujuru to lead the country and that it believes that there is nothing wrong with her leading a faction. The editorial of *NewsDay* tries to convince readers of the pitfalls of

letting Mnangagwa lead the country as he is leading a group of what are perceived as radical opportunists. These are people who have no worthy investments in the country that they will seek to protect but are a bunch of looters who are said to be;

. . . steeped in nationalist socialist dogma.... continue to ape President Robert Mugabe Pan Africanist grandstanding, complete with its anti- Western, pro East policies. They will pursue Chinese investments to the exclusion of everyone else and therefore will perpetuate the country's pariah status. (p8).

*NewsDay*, therefore, urges its readers to embrace Mujuru who is depicted as being more popular and a moderate who will mend Zimbabwe's relationship with the West and bring investment in the country through rather simplistic connection that;

Zimbabweans, generally, as the argument goes, are partial towards the West because of their historical ties with former coloniser Britain and are wary of China, the principal Eastern investor in Zimbabwe.

The editorial "*Don't be misled by Zanu PF opportunists (19/11/14)*" also tries to elicit sympathy for Mujuru as popular because she was being persecuted for being a moderate by noting that "the almost universal sympathy that Mujuru has garnered during her open persecution is therefore understandable in this context" (of being moderate). The claims that there is universal sympathy for Mujuru without tangible evidence is an exaggeration which borders on sensationalism and emotionalism associated with tabloids (Bird 1992, Sparks 2000, Franklin 1997).

*NewsDay* dismisses Mnangagwa as a radical who leads a group of people described as "pretenders either left behind in the rate-race of the past three decades or too young to have joined in it and would therefore wish to make up lost time by grabbing the reins of power" (p8). The use of words such as "pretenders", "too young" and "grabbing" are all strategically deployed in the politics of legitimating Mujuru while de-legitimising Mnangagwa in the eyes of readers and the electorate.

To demonstrate further sympathy for Mujuru as moderate leader the editorial sarcastically questions why First Lady Grace Mugabe, who has a huge fortune, is not on Mujuru's side which should guarantee the protection of her wealth. *NewsDay* argues that the First Lady is not calculative enough to protect her interests because "her impulsive rage of anger against the VP is almost a crime of passion". The fights in ZANU PF are also dismissed as having nothing to do with the interests of ordinary people which by implication can only be guaranteed by Mujuru who leads rich people who have something to protect.

### 6.1.3 Omission analysis

In the editorial “*Don’t be misled by Zanu PF opportunists (19/11/14)*”, *NewsDay* is very clear of its cynicism of Pan Africanism, socialism and Chinese investment. However, beyond the representation of Mujuru as a moderate leader who will supposedly extricate Zimbabwe from its economic and political isolation, the editorial simplistically assumes that Mujuru is the answer to all the challenges facing the Zimbabwean society, which trivialises the whole issue (Sparks 2000, McNair 2001). The editorial “*Don’t be misled by Zanu PF opportunists (19/11/14)*” also ignores the adverse effects of colonialism and Western capital on African development and more specifically does not explain why Zimbabwe abandoned the Western ties in the first place.

Like tabloids, *NewsDay* does not provide the specific context for audiences why Zimbabwe cut ties with the West before considering the Chinese investment (Bird 2000). Furthermore, the editorial “*Don’t be misled by Zanu PF opportunists (19/11/14)*” is based on street talk in coming to the conclusion that Zimbabweans prefer to maintain historical ties with Britain - which negates the whole aspect of fighting for independence from Britain. The editorial “*Don’t be misled by Zanu PF opportunists (19/11/14)*” also overplays the sympathy for Mujuru by describing it as “almost universal” and “understandable” when all that *NewsDay* wanted was to set an agenda to project Mujuru as a leader worth supporting as the claim of universal support is not supported by any empirical evidence.

Also by admitting that Mujuru leads a faction, inherited a “billion-dollar empire from her late husband, has bankers and white people behind her” *NewsDay* seems to overplay the assumption that she will deliver the country from its current problems. What it also points out to is that maybe the allegations that she is corrupt can be true because it seems that while the country has huge problems, Mujuru and other people are filthy rich. Another omission that *NewsDay* makes is that by virtue of having bankers and white people in her faction, Mujuru will ultimately solve all the problems in the country. The notion of White people as the solution or as a measure of genuine creators of wealth also represents a warped and simplistic connection which insults the intelligence of its readers by trivialising the problems that the country is facing to a simple equation of plus Mujuru then all the challenges will be dealt with (Esser 1999, Bakkes 1999).

#### 6.1.4 Limiting debate

The editorial “*Don’t be misled by Zanu PF opportunists (19/11/14)*” tried to provide justification why people should support Mujuru as a moderate leader who will supposedly extricate Zimbabwe out of its current political and economic problems as opposed to Mnangagwa, who is depicted as a dangerous radical. Beyond the simplistic binaries of good versus the bad and Western capital versus Eastern capital, there is no elaboration to provide a meaningful context to back the arguments. Western capital is presented as without challenges and a solution to Zimbabwean problems. This is an assumption that is contestable, ahistorical and de-contextualised. The editorial “*Don’t be misled by Zanu PF opportunists (19/11/14)*” could have expanded the debate by dwelling more on what Mujuru could do rather than focusing on the perceived weaknesses of Mnangagwa. Furthermore, *NewsDay* could have explained how Mujuru’s plans could be beneficial to all the common people, especially by interrogating how as a rich person she could possibly understand the issues that affect poor people. Editorial comments are supposed to argue, urge, commend and condemn based on empirical evidence, but in this case the editorial “*Don’t be misled by Zanu PF opportunists (19/11/14)*” relies on common street talk (Bird 1992) to project Mujuru as a desirable moderate leader without demonstrating her moderateness and where she practised these unless she was leading a parallel government within ZANU PF. Another aspect that limits debate is making simplistic connections that rich people are the answer to Zimbabwe’s problem. Zimbabwe does not need rich people, it needs good policies that allow everyone to realise their potential and collectively uplift the rest of society. Also the depiction of Mujuru as a moderate leader omitted what most readers would have wanted to know about her political programme that will be the solution to the challenges facing the country. As one respondent noted;

...if you to look up to this day you can realise that *NewsDay* coverage is biased and sidelined the main issues which I can term the bread and butter issues but instead continued to recycle information that the public already knows, when people are looking for what she has to offer in the next elections but alas *NewsDay* concentrated on trivial issues which benefit them through sales hence the need to sensationalise important issues. Failure to question those allegations (which Mujuru faced) was a clear disservice by the media. (*Interview 23/05/17*).

The above quotation raises issues related the trivialisation and sensationalisation of important issues which negates the expected role the media from audiences. This is a confirmation that the media is driving towards tabloidisation as defined by several scholars such as (McNair 2001, Bird 2000, Kurtz 1993, Turner 2004, Kalb 1997 and Bakkes 1999). It therefore follows

from the editorial “*Don’t be misled by Zanu PF opportunists (19/11/14)* that *NewsDay* was more pre-occupied with propping up the candidature of Mujuru. Her entry into the political scene as an opposition leader is described as “grand” as depicted in the story “*Mujuru in grand political entry*” (2/03/16). Her entry is described as being accompanied by “drama and excitement” especially due to the fact that she described Zimbabwe as “broken state crying out for transmission”. She is portrayed as “someone who did not disappoint” by telling her lieutenants “go there and multiply”. The story “*Mujuru in grand political entry*” (2/03/16) depicts her as the messiah who will deliver or transform the country which is described as broken and crying out for transformation from the current “unjust systems which the liberation war was fought to remove” as Mujuru argued that;

We fought for the right to self-determination, the right to freedom, the right to vote under the principle of one person one vote and not one man voting for us all. Today that unjust system that Zanu, Zipra and the Zimbabwean masses fought against remains a noose around our necks, as that system has stolen any hope for the people of Zimbabwe.

From the above quote Mujuru is presented as the voice of reason who will liberate all Zimbabweans from an unjust colonial system which has been perpetuated in independent Zimbabwe by ZANU PF. *NewsDay*, in tabloid style, concentrated on the less and exciting and less informing by printing such outlandish statements by Mujuru without questioning them to enlighten citizens especially on why all of a sudden Mujuru disassociates herself from a system she was fighting to cling on to ( Bird 1992, Sparks 2000, McNair 2001).

In the same story “*Mujuru in grand political entry*” (2/03/16) she is also portrayed as a reformer who will effectively do away with what are described as “ineffective Mugabe policies such as indigenisation, land reform among others, creating a conducive investment climate, meeting international obligations and returning Zimbabwe to the international community by arguing that;

The investment environment is crowded by multiple incoherent policies, inadequate and unaffordable credit finance and urgent needs for reform in parasitic non-performing parastatals sector. Zimbabwe needs friendly and market driven policies to stimulate economic activity. There should be an independent land audit to weed out multiple farm ownership and support for sustainable land use. We shall be committed to meeting our international debt obligation. We shall seek rapprochement with countries that currently have poor diplomatic and difficult economic relations with Zimbabwe without sacrificing our sovereignty. “*Mujuru in grand political entry*” (2/03/16).

The assertions in the above quote needed to be thoroughly interrogated as Mujuru was part of the government for more than three decades. It seems all the sentiments were just outlandish and cheap propaganda for her to appeal to the electorate (Franklin 1997, Sloan 2001). *NewsDay* should have questioned especially whether what Mujuru was saying was anything news or different from what the MDC-T or other Western governments had said in opposing ZANU PF policies. *NewsDay* seemed content with reproducing such statements as depicted in the wholesale printing of her speech in the story “*Mujuru in grand political entry*” (2/03/16) without any critical analysis. Such reproductions show that *NewsDay*, contrary to its stated editorial guidelines, does not respect the intelligence and memory of their readers. Just like tabloids for the sake of either profits (Sampson 1996) or trying to sway people to support Mujuru as a reformist leader, *NewsDay* further gives space for Mujuru to present herself as a reformer through the statement that;

If there is any crime that I am guilty of, it is the belief in the periodic constitutional and democratic renewal of leadership from within and this is the same position I am now promoting with ZimPF “*Mujuru in grand political entry*” (2/03/16).

Again, the reformist stance by Mujuru in the above quote also needed to be questioned because there was no practical demonstration of Mujuru wanting to reform from within besides trying to take over from President Mugabe, unless *NewsDay* perceives taking over power through factional politics as its definition of a reformist leader.

Also associated with the characterisation of Mujuru as a moderate leader was a portrayal of her as a brave leader ready to challenge for the highest political office in the country. This aspect comes to light in the story “*Mujuru heads for Mat South*” (7/9/16) where she is depicted as going ahead with her rallies despite a police ban on what are described as “terrorism” fears. Mujuru’s party argued that there was no terrorism at all in the country except that ZANU PF is terrified by rising tides of opposition forces which it was mistaking for terrorism. The story “*Mujuru heads for Mat South*” (7/9/16) seeks to depict Mujuru as a rising political giant, which ZANU PF is afraid of competition and thus using devious methods to derail Mujuru from campaigning in a region where the ruling party has not fared very well in elections.

In further build-up the framing of Mujuru as a moderate leader, her response to attacks by First Lady Grace Mugabe are also described as being made by a “cool and mature leader” who offered a dignified response. Mujuru is depicted as having not resorted to name-calling under what are described as “malicious and maligning accusations by Mugabe which are based on rumours” “*Mujuru heads for Mat South*” (7/9/16).

*NewsDay* also applauds Mujuru for demonstrating “true” leadership by refusing to reduce herself to a mudslinging match with President Mugabe and his wife Grace who allegedly opened what are described as “floodgates of vicious verbal attacks on Mujuru” p8.

When Mujuru finally responded to the accusations by the First Lady of being corrupt, inept and trying to assassinate the president, *NewsDay* again applauds Mujuru for offering what is described as a dignified response as captured in the story “*Mujuru’s response hailed as dignified, but a little too late*” (18/11/14) by publishing a press statement which does not resort to name calling but simply responds to all the allegations. Surprisingly the story “*Mujuru’s response hailed as dignified, but a little too late*” (18/11/14) never bothers to explain why her response was so late. Instead Mujuru is described as breaking her golden silence against a smear campaign aimed at stalling her political career with one political analyst, Pedzisai Ruhanya, describing her as “simply saying, people of Zimbabwe, this is where I stand hear me – I am being framed and scandalised but I am innocent” “*Mujuru’s response hailed as dignified, but a little too late*” (18/11/14) p16. Ruhanya then rips into the sympathetic framing while at the same time trying to exonerate Mujuru from the treason allegations by insisting that;

Her (Mujuru) accusers are ungrateful to the role her husband played in the war, he died in a mysterious way but is being scandalised – in that statement Mujuru is only appealing to the court of public opinion. She wants Zimbabweans to critically debate these issues and exonerate her... she has a dark history as someone else who lost her husband and as a politician. She might have her own weaknesses but I don’t think she can harbour any intention to kill the president. “*Mujuru’s response hailed as dignified, but a little too late*” (18/11/14).

Also in the words of another analyst, Ibbo Mandaza, Mujuru is depicted as a victim of factional leadership in ZANU PF who also deserve public sympathy by arguing that;

It is embarrassing that factional leadership can stoop so low to frame the Vice President of the country. I have never expected that people who are intellectuals and professionals can stoop so low, it is terrible what has been happening when a whole vice president is subjected to such ridicule is totally unacceptable. “*Mujuru’s response hailed as dignified, but a little too late*” (18/11/14).

Mujuru is also described as not being the first person to be accused of treason as the late ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo, Zanu Ndonga leader Ndabaningi Sithole and MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai were said to have been similarly charged with treason.

In a consistent fashion, *NewsDay* tried to project the readiness of Mujuru to be the next preferred leader by resorting to speculative reports derived from anonymous sources (Sloan

2001). Such speculative stories include *“Mujuru gets ball rolling”* (26/11/15), which speculated that Mujuru had appended her signature to the formation of a new opposition party called People First despite the fact that the then purported spokesperson Rugare Gumbo expressed doubts over such a development by noting that; “I am not sure about signing, as far as I know it, it has not been signed. We agreed that that it is a good document.....we are still finalising with our sympathisers and supporters”. Such denials show the extent to which *NewsDay* sought to set an agenda and build a favourable image of Mujuru by writing fictitious stories (Bird 2000) as the paper insinuated in the lead of the story *“Mujuru gets ball rolling”* (26/11/15) that it was reliably informed that Mujuru had appended her signature as the leader of the opposition party. Also the same fictitious sources in the story *“Mujuru gets ball rolling”* (26/11/15) were used to project the envisaged People First party in good light by claiming it to be pro-people in that;

We are organising and getting ideas from people. We believe that any transformation will have to come from the people. We do not believe in ZANU PF thinking of one centre of power, it is feudalistic, primitive and monarchical understanding that does not have a place in modern society. *“Mujuru gets ball rolling”* (26/11/15).

To also bolster the moderate leader frame, Mujuru is depicted as having some form of bravery especially by giving a statement to the media denying all the allegations levelled against her by First Lady Grace Mugabe in the story *“Mujuru hits back”* (17/11/14). The story *“Mujuru hits back”* (17/11/14) depicts Mujuru as spoiling for a fight and one who would not easily give up in serving the country and ZANU PF as what was being demanded by what are described as her detractors. The story *“Mujuru hits back”* (17/11/14) is accompanied by a manipulated picture of Mujuru seemingly confronting Mugabe in an effort to demonstrate her supposed bravery.

Another aspect that is brought by *NewsDay* as part of the supposedly good leadership and motherly care of Mujuru is her benevolence. This is shown when she is said to have paid salaries of her aides whose contracts had been terminated following her firing from both party and government in the story *“Mujuru rescues 12 ex-aides”* (17/08/15) with the information on such benevolence again based on anonymous sources (Sloan 2001, Bird 2000).

Mujuru is also presented as a fighter in the story *“Mujuru ready to fight Zanu PF”* (3/06/15). *NewsDay* was uncritical in its blind support for Mujuru by claiming that “Mujuru by apologising to Zimbabweans and pledging to move on from the failures of the Robert Mugabe government is the strongest indication yet that she is ready to challenge ZANU PF”. The story



*“Mujuru ready to fight Zanu PF” (3/06/15)*, insults the intelligence of readers by immediately assuming that Mujuru now wants to serve Zimbabwe in whatever capacity because she has undergone a traumatic experience caused by what is described as her “unprocedural expulsion from the party and government”. It’s possible to argue that if Mujuru had not been expelled, it is probable she would have continued enjoying the privileges that ZANU PF had offered her for more than 35 years.

The question that comes to mind is that *NewsDay* simplistically deduced that the fact that Mujuru was rejected from ZANU PF naturally makes her become a fighter of a system which she benefitted from immensely for more than three decades. Also *NewsDay* failed to ask the question why she suddenly becomes a fighter of a system she was desperately trying to cling to. This failure dovetails well into the potential dangers of the tabloidisation of the media in that although more information is being made available, most of it is of negligible importance. It is unhelpful information unable making the citizen wiser (Sparks 2000, Esser 1999). It seems *NewsDay* was so desperate to find an alternative to Mugabe to the extent of supporting anyone who opposed him. As noted by one respondent, such an approach towards Mujuru was informed by the need to find an alternative person who could challenge President Mugabe;

After the rather indifferent performance by the MDC-T in the July 31, 2013, Harmonised elections and how ZANU PF has behaved since that time, there was need for a fresh face and possibly new ideas and Joice Mujuru provided that. In the same vein, the way she was hounded out of ZANU PF was an indicator that she could provide that impetus that ZANU PF and MDC-T failed to provide to Zimbabweans. While in ZANU PF, Mujuru was widely considered to be a moderate and our politics requires people of a similar make and nature. (*Interview: 13/3/17*).

*NewsDay* saw a possibility of a suitable candidate who could appeal to most people in that Mujuru was a war veteran and therefore believed to be acceptable because of her war credentials. *NewsDay* also wrongly assumes that Mujuru could be acceptable to the security sector which expressed its discomfort with accepting someone without a war history like MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai. In all the above mentioned ways, *NewsDay* also sought to capitalise on the perceived moderateness of Mujuru to push her to challenge for political office.

In another brazen exhibition of uncritical writing expected of a serious newspaper or one that describes itself as one such, *NewsDay* in the story *“Mujuru stages ‘palace coup’ (29/02/16)* sought to portray Mujuru as a political giant by arguing that she managed to host over 100 disgruntled war veterans and former top government officials after “apologising profusely for

propping up ZANU PF misrule through violent campaigns since 1985". The story "*Mujuru stages 'palace coup'* (29/02/16) also makes sensational claims derived from anonymous sources claiming that freedom fighters who attended her meeting also apologised "for participating in state sponsored sting operations and smear campaign which triggered her ouster from the governing party and government".

Such claims were simply meant to sanitise Mujuru and portray her as a victim and one who needs sympathy because of the perception that she is a good leader being unfairly treated by being ostracised. *NewsDay* also tried to elicit sympathy (Bakkes 1999) for the expulsion of Mujuru from ZANU PF by clearly stating that she was fired but went on to publish sensational claims by Mujuru that she was not fired from ZANU PF. In fact as a brave, calculative and resolute individual who, after assessing the situation, she decided to walk away because;

I (Mujuru) said to myself December 1 2014 was D-day...then went to Mugabe's office and spoke to him. I told him my hands and heart are clear. I have never planned to harm or kill anyone and I said to him that tomorrow (at the politburo meeting on 02 December 2014) I won't be among you, I'm leaving Zanu PF and I am happy to do that with my hands clean. "*Mujuru stages 'palace coup'* (29/02/16).

*NewsDay* also tried to amplify, through speculative reports that MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai was panicking over the arrival of Mujuru as an opposition leader in a colourful story based on gossip "*Tsvangirai panics over Mujuru*" (13/01/16). The story insinuates that Tsvangirai was panicking over the launch of People First which was targeting its disgruntled members. The story "*Tsvangirai panics over Mujuru*" (13/01/16) relies on unconfirmed gossip from anonymous sources as the spokespersons of MDC-T and People First expressed ignorance over the reports. The exploitation of colour, employment of innuendo and anonymous sources shows the extent to which *NewsDay* resorted to these tabloid styles in its sympathetic framing of Mujuru (Sloan 2001, Schonbach 2000).

Furthermore, *NewsDay* tried to prop up Mujuru as a rising political giant by reporting that she was making political inroads in Mashonaland West by recruiting disgruntled ZANU PF and MDC-T top officials in its ranks in the story *Mujuru rips into Mugabe stronghold* (11/9/16). Surprisingly, one of the reportedly disgruntled ZANU PF officials is Marian Chombo in Mashonaland West who expressed ignorance over the issue, arguing that there was nothing concrete in such reports, further raising doubts over the authenticity of such reports.

*NewsDay* painted a picture of Mujuru as a victim in order to draw sympathy for her. The opinion piece entitled "*Women's League blatantly brutish about Mujuru's widowhood*"

(12/11/14) demonstrates this sympathetic approach with the intention of building an image of a mature leader being needlessly persecuted.

The story “*Women’s League blatantly brutish about Mujuru’s widowhood*” (12/11/14) underlines that widowhood is not a laughing matter and uses an exemplar of singer Oliver Mtukudzi’s expression of the plight of widows in the song *Neria*, to the effect that widowhood is a “prison without walls...even the church is no haven”. The writer in the opinion uses emotive language to show the plight of widows and his own experience of a being raised by a widow by noting that widows are “exposed to perils just as unfenced orchards are with passers-by... they are segregated against akin to outcasts, no wonder my mother is divine supplication is indelible in my heart”. The writer evokes sympathy for Mujuru for what he describes as a tirade from Grace Mugabe and the ZANU PF women’s league who are described as “ungracious foes” (p8).

The writer also delves into the speech by Joice Mujuru at the memorial service of her husband General Solomon Mujuru to show how she is devastated by widowhood by stating that;

Speaking at the memorial service of her late husband Retired General Solomon Mujuru, Vice President Joice Mujuru underscored the brokenness of the widows as she fought back tears, her confession to missing him was sorrowing, so was her unrehearsed demeanour and solemnity. A widow in her heart was ajar, exposing her being blown apart. Like all widows, she too is vulnerable; it was heartening to hear a series of unsavoury utterances disguised as political slogans shouted at her. It overwhelmed me that her fellow womenfolk could be blatantly brutish about widowhood. Her foes in the ZANU PF women’s league conspired against her taunting “down with those who burn husbands” “*Women’s League blatantly brutish about Mujuru’s widowhood*” (12/11/14/p 8).

To show the insensitiveness of such statements, the writer suggests how President Mugabe would feel if people would say “Down with those who shove brothers in swimming pool”, in reference to the late brother of the President and trade unionist Albert Mugabe who met his fate in a drowning mishap. The target of the criticism for being brutish against widowhood is First Lady Grace Mugabe who is also compared with the late Sally Mugabe as the writer again makes another comparison by stating that;

Similarly although it is an open secret that the First Lady Grace Mugabe conceived with the President whilst his late wife was alive and that she came to the state house via “small house” it would likewise be cold hearted for her rivals to chant “Down with small houses that snatch husbands” “*Women’s League blatantly brutish about Mujuru’s widowhood*” (12/11/14/p 8).

The story “*Women’s League blatantly brutish about Mujuru’s widowhood*” (12/11/14) also adds to the build-up on the efforts by *NewsDay* to exonerate Mujuru of all the allegations and paint her as being persecuted as a defenceless widow after the death of her husband and a good leader by claiming that;

It is my fervent contention that if the General was still alive... the scorn being shown his widow could hardly have been uttered. All is happening because she is a widow. Beneath the chorus for her ouster...widowhood contributes to her vulnerability. She however ought to draw solace from ancient truths...sticks and stones are thrown only at fruit bearing trees... as the ZANU PF interparty rivals tailspins, it is singularly for her widowhood that she is reckoned as black bile, she is not filthy corrupt as alleged rather she is a soft target with no husband to buttress her, she is trodden like a path of least resistance. “*Women’s League blatantly brutish about Mujuru’s widowhood*” (12/11/14/p 8).

From the above quote, Mujuru is presented as one who is being persecuted because she has good deeds which is emphasised by the phrase “sticks and stones are thrown only at fruit-bearing trees”. Also the writer seeks to exonerate her in that she is being made a sacrificial lamb because she is a widow, which could also be a silent way of trying to shield her from criticism and absolve her from any wrong doing simply because she is a widow.

## **6.2 Sympathetic frame**

In the sympathetic frame *NewsDay* sought to elicit sympathy for Joice Mujuru by portraying her as a defenceless widow who was being persecuted for no justifiable cause by her rivals in ZANU PF. The enlisting of sympathy is not a broadsheet journalism attribute which should present solid facts but a tabloid technique of trying to involve readers emotionally in a bid to ignore complex analysis (Bakkes 1999, Franklin 1997, Gripsrud 2000). The sympathy for Mujuru by *NewsDay* was calculated to draw readers to her side and position her as a person with leadership qualities that are desirable for all Zimbabweans. To bring out the manifestations of this frame, the story *Attacking Mujuru is unAfrican: Msipa* (10/11/14) below will be analysed.

# Attacking Mujuru is unAfrican: Msipa

November 10, 2014 in [News](#)

ZANU PF politburo member and former Midlands governor, Cephas Msipa, yesterday came to the defence of underfire Vice-President Joice Mujuru and described her vilification by First Lady Grace Mugabe and other party members as “unAfrican”.

**Richard Muponde**  
**Senior Reporter**

Msipa yesterday told our sister paper, Southern Eye, that the public attacks on Mujuru would have ripple effects on the country’s already battered image, as the nation would be viewed as chaotic.

He said attacking Mujuru was tantamount to attacking President Robert Mugabe, as he was the one who appointed her.

“We can’t respect the President alone without respecting the second in command,” Msipa said.

“The attacks against Mujuru are as good as attacking the President who appointed her, she didn’t appoint herself.”

He said the verbal attacks were being spawned by factional fights.

“They consider her to be standing in their way and want her removed at all cost.

“They are doing it with the hope that the public will turn against her, but that’s not correct, people abhor what they are doing.”

Msipa, who quit public office in 2008, said he expected party supporters to respect their seniors, as this was part of the country and party’s culture.

“It’s unAfrican what they are doing to her,” he said.

“If we allow that to happen to her, then we should also allow it to be done to all ministers and senior party officials.

“What kind of a country will it be?

“It’s not good for the country to have a people without moral values, ubuntu.

“Even senior people who are using youths to vilify her know that what they are doing is wrong and wouldn’t like it to be done to them, it’s all driven by selfishness.”

Msipa’s remarks came as Zanu PF Bulawayo provincial executive led by Callistus Ndlovu has distanced itself from last

Friday’s anti-Mujuru demonstration at the Joshua Mqabuko International Airport.

Ndlovu yesterday said he was caught unawares by the demonstrators, as the demonstration was not planned by his executive.

“We saw them, we don’t know who sponsored them,” he said.

“These are just individuals, I am also surprised to see the demonstration, I do not understand why they are demonstrating.”

The demonstrators had gathered at the airport to welcome President Robert Mugabe, who was due to officiate at the National University of Science and Technology graduation.

“These are unruly elements, we are going to look into it. The security is going to look for the culprits.”

Mujuru has found herself in the eye of storm since First Lady Grace Mugabe last month went public accusing her of corruption and planning to topple Mugabe. She is now pushing for her ouster.

Source - <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2014/11/10/attacking-mujuru-unaffrican-msipa/>

**Figure 17**

### **6.2.1 Words and symbols**

The use of the word “*attacking*” presumes that Mujuru is innocent and is being unfairly treated. The Oxford Students Dictionary defines the word “attack” as “to act violently against someone or to start a fight with them”. The story “*Attacking Mujuru is unAfrican: Msipa*” (10/11/14) is calculated to invoke sympathy for Mujuru by readers. Firstly, it highlights the fact that Mujuru is being attacked and that such kind of an attack is something strange through the use of the word “*unAfrican*”. It, therefore, follows that according to *NewsDay* whoever is attacking Mujuru lacks the African moral values of Ubuntu or unhu. Thus by implication an attack on Mujuru is presented as an attack on all humanity and to make it worse Mujuru is being attacked by juniors in the party who should actually respect her especially that she is a widow who should actually be protected. By depicting Mujuru as being under attack *NewsDay* creates in her a victim who deserves sympathy from all the readers.

Also the use of the words “vilification” and “underfire Vice President Joice Mujuru” is meant to amplify the victim in Mujuru as a result of the unpleasant things that were being said about her. The sympathy for Mujuru is made authoritative through the use of former ZANU PF politburo member and Midlands Provincial Governor, a close relative of the President who then comes to her defence.

The use of *Msipa* is meant to buttress that Mujuru is under severe attack and, therefore, deserves public sympathy. Although *Msipa* does not mention First Lady Grace Mugabe by name, he abhors whoever is behind the vilification of Mujuru by arguing that; “They (those attacking Mujuru) are doing it with the hope that the public will turn against her but that is not correct,

people abhor what they are doing''. With a respectable figure like Msipa making such assertions, *NewsDay* presents Mujuru as worth public of sympathy as she is being singled out for what are described as selfish motives. Furthermore, Msipa notes that in all fairness those behind what is happening to Mujuru know that it is wrong and if it is done to those planning it they would not be happy by arguing that; "Even senior people who are using youths to vilify her know that what they are doing is wrong and wouldn't like it to be done to them, it's all driven by selfishness". Overall in the story "*Attacking Mujuru is unAfrican: Msipa*" (10/11/14) Mujuru is presented as an innocent victim of selfish politicians motivated by malice and hatred.

### 6.2.2 Preferred meanings

The story "*Attacking Mujuru is unAfrican: Msipa*" (10/11/14) is meant to achieve a dominant reading (Morley 1980) that Mujuru is an innocent victim who is being unfairly vilified and attacked by enemies. The perceived enemies of Mujuru are portrayed as seeking to see her unjust downfall in nasty factional politics because they consider her to be "standing in their way and want her removed at all costs". Also the story "*Attacking Mujuru is unAfrican: Msipa*" (10/11/14) subtly seeks to absolve Mujuru from any alleged wrongdoing by portraying her as being under shameful vilification and attack by morally bankrupt juniors who wish not only shame her but the whole country. When juniors attack Mujuru, it then becomes an attack on the country as Mujuru is being equated to the country. The story "*Attacking Mujuru is unAfrican: Msipa*" (10/11/14) suggests that it is ridiculous to attack Mujuru as an attack on her is also an attack on President Mugabe who appointed her. The reasoning is if the President allows such attacks the only possibility is that the President is the instigator of the attacks otherwise why would he attack himself. "*Attacking Mujuru is unAfrican: Msipa*" (10/11/14) also brings out issues of selective justice in that the attack on Mujuru should also be directed towards "all ministers and senior party officials". All this is meant to draw sympathy for Mujuru as someone who is being unfairly treated.

### 6.2.3 Omission analysis

Although the story "*Attacking Mujuru is unAfrican: Msipa*" (10/11/14) is based on an interview with a respected former ZANU PF politician, it makes an obvious bias in presuming that Mujuru is innocent of all the allegations levelled against her. The story also falsely presumes that she is a victim of factional fights as if she did not lead one. There is hypocrisy on the part of *NewsDay* as its reports never questioned the goodness of Mujuru, or lack of it,

when the Mujuru faction was winning especially in the 2014 ZANU PF Youth Congress where the Mnangagwa faction lost to her. *NewsDay* ignores other stories where it seemed to celebrate Mujuru's successes in factional politics and now sees her as a victim worth sympathising with because she is losing.

Also, by describing the allegations on Mujuru as an "attack" on her and the President, *NewsDay* unnecessarily tries to protect Mujuru from criticism. The fact that she was appointed by the President does not mean that she is immune from being criticised. This, again, is an erroneous assumption which implies that the two are inseparable. If the Vice president is appointed at the pleasure of the President, it does not necessarily mean that she cannot be criticised as the President is a subject of immense criticism by the press. What the *NewsDay* seemed to be surprised at is that it treats state media criticism of Mujuru as an anomaly. This is unethical because everyone holding a public office must be criticised if the media is playing the watchdog role as the fourth estate. In addition the portrayal of what *NewsDay* calls "attack" described as "unAfrican" is calculated to elicit sympathy as there is nothing "unAfrican" about the criticism. In fact, it can argued that it is very African to criticise and speak truth to power.

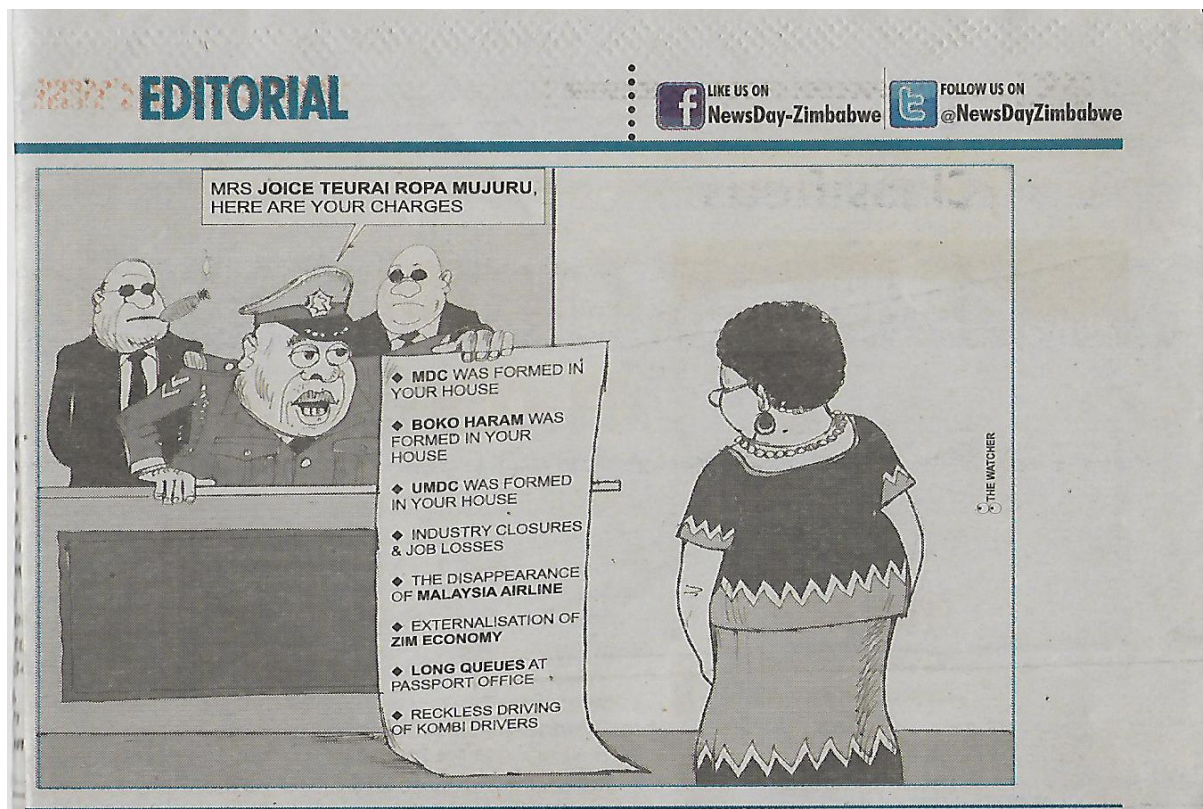
#### **6.2.4 Limiting debate**

Ideally, the media should provide all the relevant information especially on controversial issues to allow for a fuller understanding among the readers. The story "*Attacking Mujuru is unAfrican: Msipa*" (10/11/14 is calculated to cleanse and sympathise with Mujuru than spelling out whether or not Mujuru was guilty of the allegations of treason, corruption and inept performance to readers and voters who would decide on whether she is worth their support.

It seems that "*Attacking Mujuru is unAfrican: Msipa*" (10/11/14 contains heavy bias towards Mujuru without informing readers on her envisaged policies that will extricate Zimbabwe from its challenges if she assumes power. Furthermore, for *NewsDay* to argue that an attack on the president is an attack on Mujuru is cheap logic which is not sustainable because it implies immunity on her part from public criticism. Instead *NewsDay* spends more time on Mujuru's political manifesto and thus, the paper squanders a rare moment to act as a watchdog. The fact that *NewsDay* stories are very short, just like in tabloids (Schonbach 2000), also limits debate in that there is not much that can be deliberated in a single story to give the proper context which in itself leads to de-contextualisation of the Mujuru expulsion from ZANU PF (Bird 2000).



In the sympathetic frame, *NewsDay* also made extensive use of cartoons to demonstrate how Mujuru was expelled from ZANU PF. One such cartoon sought to ridicule the allegations of corruption and treason that were being levelled against Mujuru by suggesting that it seems as if Mujuru was guilty of all the crimes in the whole world. In so doing *NewsDay* demonstrated the sensationalisation of issues which the tabloid media was also guilty of by simply reacting to accusations without any critical analysis (Sparks 2000, Gripsrud 2000, McNair 2001, Örnebring and Jonson 2004). The cartoon below is typical of the way *NewsDay* sought to tell the expulsion of Mujuru from ZANU PF by trivialising the accusations against her.



*NewsDay* 22/11/14 (Figure 18)

The cartoon above ridicules the allegations that Mujuru is responsible for the economic and political chaos in the country. Her enemies are portrayed as gullible enough to believe that Mujuru is responsible for all the things that are going wrong in the country and in the whole world. Cartoons are critical in communicating important messages because they contain pointed messages that provide contemporary social commentary coupled with innocent humour which is easily absorbed with little reflection or resistance. Editorial cartoons also have every appearance of simplicity and a sociological importance in that they provide a “visual rhetoric or a cognitive map for understanding popular culture and politics and a venue for “othering” since in contrast to the written word, they can escape the constraints of political correctness

(Walker 2003:20). Editorial cartoons also set the agenda and contribute to the construction of a normative agenda.

Most of *NewsDay's* sympathies with Mujuru were in terms of her relationship with First Lady Grace Mugabe. The stories were written in the more entertaining tabloid style with no real value to the audiences (Franklin 1997). A typical story which was written in an exclusively entertaining way is the one entitled "*MDC –T hecklers jeer Grace, cheer Mujuru (29/10/14)*" which reported that MDC-T hecklers;

...tore into the First Lady Grace Mugabe controversially awarded doctorate (PHD) and poked fun at her academic status when she accompanied her husband to Parliament...in contrast cheered Vice President Joice Mujuru who bore the brunt of Grace's severe attacks. "*MDC–T hecklers jeer Grace, cheer Mujuru (29/10/14/Page 3)*).

While the story "*MDC –T hecklers jeer Grace, cheer Mujuru (29/10/14)*" was based on speculative reports that Grace Mugabe was conferred with a PHD which she allegedly did not study for, without offering much except sympathy for Mujuru, the story included entertaining statements by MDC–T MP Fani Munengami who is reported to have shouted "Vapinda Gushungona Doctor Amai" (President Mugabe and Doctor Mother (Grace Mugabe) have entered the Parliament building. How is the doctorate?"

The printing of statements such as "How is the doctorate? shows the extent to which *NewsDay* could go, just like tabloids, to excite readers by printing information that titillates the mind as an end in itself (Sloan 2001). The statement personifies a doctorate degree who can answer back to a person without feelings. *NewsDay* resorted to tabloid style with reckless abandon. The newspaper reporting style is driven by the need to sell copies. The tendency towards tabloidisation has been deeply entrenched in the Zimbabwean press and makes print media run the risk of being dismissed by the readers whose intelligence it insults everyday.

Another example of the sympathetic framing of Mujuru is also brought out in the story "*Mujuru heads to Manicaland*" (27/10/14) where she was to officiate at the burial of the remains of close to 100 freedom fighters which were retrieved from a disused mine shaft at old Mutare. The sympathetic frame comes in the form of the statements to the effect that officiating at this occasion gives her an opportunity to address the public after two weeks of "public bashing by First Lady Grace Mugabe where she was labelled as corrupt, inept and unfit to remain in office" "*Mujuru heads to Manicaland*" (27/10/14/ Page 3). The comments by the First Lady are again derived from anonymous sources who also alleged that the invitation to Mujuru to officiate at

this event was a “calculative move by her sympathisers to counter a spirited campaign to tarnish her political image”. In addition, the story “*Mujuru heads to Manicaland*” (27/10/14) also sought to build an image of a heroine in Mujuru by insinuating that she was coming to bury the people that she worked with in the war as their commander.

The loss of the parliamentary seat in Mount Darwin by Mujuru as reported in the story “*Mujuru finally loses MT Darwin seat*” (18/11/14) is depicted as an act of humiliation for her despite the fact that it was unconstitutional for her to cling on to the seat, especially after being appointed Vice President in 2013 according to Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (Number 20) Act 2013. *NewsDay* describes the loss of the parliamentary seat as completing what is described as “Mujuru’s total humiliation as just two weeks ago she was the second most powerful Zimbabwean yet she has been reduced to an ordinary Zanu PF member with no political office and little authority” “*Mujuru finally loses MT Darwin seat*” (18/11/14) p3.

The sympathy is brought out in the fact that the story alleges that when Joice Mujuru and President Mugabe were still in “good books” the constitutional provision that she vacates the parliamentary seat was deliberately ignored. In “*Mujuru finally loses MT Darwin seat*” (18/11/14/Page 3) Mugabe is portrayed as having ignored Section 129(1) which stipulates that a parliamentary seat becomes vacant upon a member becoming a Vice President or President. The story “*Mujuru finally loses MT Darwin seat*” (18/11/14) confirms that *NewsDay*’s reporting is eventbased and lacks critical analysis of issues as the paper failed to play the watchdog role. The paper only waited for Mujuru to be fired in order to realise that she was occupying the Mt Darwin parliamentary seat in violation of the Constitution.

Also in the editorial comment; *What has Mugabe up his sleeve?* (21/11/14), *NewsDay* demonstrates its sympathy by suggesting that Mugabe might be stage-managing what is described as a whole charade of firing Mujuru in order to see the true colours of the factional leaders in the party. The editorial comment *What has Mugabe up his sleeve?* (21/11/14), questions why Mugabe would leave Mujuru as acting president when he left for Equatorial Guinea. This was despite what is described as serious allegations levelled against her by his wife who is making “scurrilous allegations including corruption, extortion, incompetence and laziness” *What has Mugabe up his sleeve?* (21/11/14/Page 8).

Other stories that amplify the sympathetic frame include; “*Mujuru skips politburo*” (27/11/14) because of what is described as a “slew of accusations levelled against her and the resultant rejection of her curriculum vitae in her Central Committee bid), and “*Mugabe blasts VP*

*Mujuru*” (03/12/14) where Mujuru is accused of “simplistic thinking” and a person who cannot handle pressures of statecraft. Although the story “*Mugabe blasts VP Mujuru*” (03/12/14) makes use of a named source, *NewsDay* continued with the worrying trend of using anonymous sources for supplying innocuous information, motivated by the desire to draw sympathy for Mujuru (Bakkes 1999). *NewsDay* also sought to elicit sympathy for Mujuru by dismissing the claims that she used juju on President Mugabe by employing a known Mujuru sympathiser, Ibbo Mandaza, in the story “*Mugabe juju claims raises stink*” (5/12/14). Mandaza argued that the allegations were “hilarious”;

Those allegations are comic and funny. It is also just another way to discredit Mujuru and this shows that she is out of it. That was the plan from day one and he has accepted what his wife (Grace) wanted. Looking back it was well planned, an unceremonious and nasty as it is, it has happened. “*Mugabe juju claims raises stink*” (5/12/14(Page 3).

From the above quote *NewsDay* wants to invoke sympathy for Mujuru as a victim of something well planned and at the same time presenting her as innocent. There is use of sympathetic analysts including one Blessing Vava, who argues that the claims of juju cannot be proven or substantiated in court as these were desperate statements meant to soil the image of Mujuru.

Through the editorial “*Mujuru sacking: End of Era*” (10/12/14), *NewsDay* argues that Mujuru’s crime was that she;

. . . entertained thoughts of acquiring the highest office through all, means fair and foul. She was humiliated and a case was built for her in the same way all those arch-rivals who were accused of trying to assassinate him (President Mugabe) but failed to stand the scrutiny of a competent court of law.

In other words, in the view of *NewsDay*, Mujuru is a victim because she thought of becoming a president one day. The public is forced to sympathise with her and even support her or the cause that she was fired for, that of being a leader. *NewsDay* wanted to create the basis for supporting Mujuru as the leader of the future.

“*Mujuru probe must target all –TIZ*” (4/02/15) argues that allegations against Mujuru are targeted at her driven by the desire to settle personal scores and humiliate rivals. The story “*Mujuru probe must target all –TIZ*” (4/02/15) argues that the fight against corruption should be targeted at all those implicated in fraudulent activities regardless of their position or political persuasion. The implication of the story “*Mujuru probe must target all –TIZ*” (4/02/15) is that all the allegations against Mujuru are just a smear campaign against her as echoed by her ally, Rugare Gumbo.

Also in another story “*Mujuru lose salary, benefits*” (16/04/15) *NewsDay* also relied on speculative gossip (Bird 1992, Gripsrud 2000) to enlist sympathy from readers by portraying the picture that Mujuru’s salary and benefits were withdrawn including her security team “as ZANU PF regime intensifies its campaign to reduce her to an ordinary citizen after expelling her from the ruling party”. The reports of withdrawal of benefits were unconfirmed as Mujuru refused to comment on the story but *NewsDay* instead relied on what are described as “well-placed sources” to claim that Mujuru did not receive her salary for December 2014. The reliance on fictitious sources and publishing of stories without confirmation is grossly unethical and raises deep suspicions that *NewsDay* stories are imaginative creations to support a perceived political ally. Again, to buttress the sympathetic frame, the story “*Mujuru lose salary, benefits*” (16/04/15) relies on unnamed sources to claim that Mugabe hated Mujuru by stating that;

... even when Mujuru was still in government Mugabe was never particular about her welfare as shown when he always gave her old cars including the Mercedes Benz S350 that was used by MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai during the period of the inclusive government...that government stopped paying her benefits should not come as a surprise indications were always there. “*Mujuru lose salary, benefits*” (16/04/15) (Page1).

Such claims are not only sensational but contain half-truths that are based on unnamed sources just to whip up emotions in typical tabloid style (Bakkes 1999). Another related story is “*Mujuru benefits withdrawal an act of cruelty – Gumbo*” (18/04/15). Gumbo described the withdrawal of the state benefits as “total cruelty, callous and unprecedented” as Mujuru herself did not comment on the issue. The publishing of such outlandish claims is meant to elicit sympathy for Mujuru and predispose the public to identify with her as an underdog and who can easily identify with ordinary people. The media perceived Mujuru to be strong enough to fight a faction-ridden ZANU PF as noted by one media analyst who argued that;

For starters, Mujuru was not just any card carrying member of ZANU PF. She was second in command. She was a real force to reckon with and in the run up to her expulsion, all provincial chairpersons were known Mujuru loyalists. So it was very natural for private newspapers to portray her as a real challenge to Mugabe. She was also seen as a real challenger considering that she had been expelled with a number of ZANU PF big fish. However, in spite of the challenges that her party is facing, they continue to see her in good light simply because "the rebels" she expelled from her party are largely seen as working with ZANU PF. So the papers seem to be doing that as a way of sympathising with her. Secondly, Zanu PF is basking in the sun following the squabbles in ZimPF. And so is the case with its mouth pieces and any other convenient supporters. Considering the polarity, *The Herald* would be basking in the glory of Zim PF demise, while the private media

would want to draw the positives. So it's just a natural flow of things in a highly polarised political environment. (*Interview 07/03/17*).

On one hand, some respondents such as one interviewed above also felt that the coverage of Mujuru was motivated by the need to make money out of the factional fights in ZANU PF and capitalising on the death of General Mujuru to set an agenda for his wife to challenge President Mugabe by noting that;

If ones goes back just before these factional fights in ZANU PF escalated to the levels that witnessed from 2014 you would see that these papers were serious critics of President Mugabe, Mujuru and ZANU PF but the tables turned after the death of General Solomon Mujuru. *NewsDay* started to wedge into the personal affairs of the Mujuru family, poking the widow to talk something to intimidate Mugabe and I think they succeeded, but you could observe that the stories had nothing to do with investigating the death of the general but it had to do with sensationalising serious issues at the benefit of the papers (*Interview 23/5/17*).

On the other hand, some respondents also thought the sympathy that Mujuru was receiving from private newspapers such as *NewsDay* were a variant of fake sympathy for Mujuru as the media capitalised on her expulsion by creating a big story by arguing that;

I would say in Zimbabwe for the CSOs and the private media anything that has to do with opposing Mugabe sells to them and the papers are no exception especially the privately owned ones. Hence to say the papers were sympathising would be a bit unfair on Mai Mujuru but I would say the newspapers used her stories to advance their own interests. That's why you could see that there was not much of exclusive stories or serious ones that were written about Mujuru by newspapers such as *NewsDay* except responding to *The Herald* or some rumours and speculation which were not supported by facts. (*Interview 23/5/17*).

It, therefore, is possible that beyond the suspicious show of sympathy to a person whose former party is ridiculed in the same newspapers for all the socio-economic malaise in the country, there was a big agenda to support Mujuru as a political alternative. The bid to sell her to the public after her bitterness about being hounded out of ZANU PF was understandable because she has the liberation war credentials which are key to power takeover.

### **6.3 Victim Frame**

*NewsDay* also sought to portray Mujuru as a victim of factional politics in ZANU PF. Mujuru is portrayed as vulnerable, especially when her husband General Solomon Mujuru was no longer there to protect her. The portrayal of Mujuru as a victim is linked to the overall framing

of her as worth sympathising with and also as a moderate leader who is being punished for entertaining hopes of becoming the president of Zimbabwe. “*Auction floor rejects Mujuru tobacco*” (05/05/15) manifests the victim frame in complex ways.

## Auction floor rejects Mujuru tobacco

May 5, 2015 in [National](#), [News](#), [Politics](#)

A CONSIGNMENT of tobacco bales from ousted former Vice-President Joice Mujuru’s Ruzambo Farm in Beatrice was last week allegedly rejected by a Harare tobacco auction floor under unclear circumstances.

**BY XOLISANI NCUBE**

Mujuru — who lost her lofty government and Zanu PF posts as President Robert Mugabe’s deputy last December after being accused of plotting to oust the Zanu PF leader — had sent her tobacco to the auction floors for marketing.

Yesterday, asked for comment over the matter, Mujuru, who is now at war with Mugabe and the Zanu PF leadership, could only say: “Not really, it has been sorted somehow.”

The ex-VP declined to disclose reasons for the initial rejection of her tobacco crop or the quantities involved.

But impeccable sources said Mujuru had more than 50 hectares under tobacco among other crops this year.

The sources said the widow of Zimbabwe’s first army general Solomon Mujuru had her tobacco delivery turned away by Tobacco Sales Floor Limited (TSF) without any explanation.

“She had to ask authorities as to why her consignment had been turned away, hence they later accepted it. But we suspect it was somehow a political move which failed to succeed,” the source close to the family said yesterday.

Mujuru’s daughter, Nyasha, who is said to be responsible for the business unit, yesterday refused to discuss the issue, referring questions to other family members.

“Why not talk to other members of the family? I can’t say anything on that. More so, I am in a meeting, so I cannot discuss anything with you,” she said before switching off her mobile phone.

TSF general manager James Mutambanesango said he was unaware of any such development, but would set up an investigation to establish circumstances surrounding the matter.

“I am currently not aware of such an incident. We will, however, institute an investigation as a matter of urgency and will advise you of our findings as soon as we make meaningful progress,” Mutambanesango said.



“I would, however, like to advise from the outset that it is not company policy to turn away any tobacco from bona-fide growers registered to sell through auction or through any of the contractors who operate from the floor.”

Mujuru fell out with her erstwhile Zanu PF comrades following a sustained campaign last year led by First Lady Grace Mugabe who publicly accused her of corruption and plotting to assassinate and topple Mugabe in order to land the coveted number one position in government and the ruling party through unconstitutional means.

Mujuru has, however, denied the charges and challenged her detractors to prove the accusation in a court of law.

Since her fall from power, there have been several reports of intrusion at the former Vice-President’s farm by suspected State security functionaries, some of whom were arrested for trespassing.

Various business investments linked to her have also fallen foul of hostile politics with some contracts being cancelled, while some executives have also been placed on surveillance on their movements to ensure that they do not interface with her openly.

<https://www.newsday.co.zw/2015/05/05/auction-floor-rejects-mujuru-tobacco/>

**Figure 19**

### **6.3.1 Words and Images**

The story “*Auction floors rejects Mujuru tobacco*” (5/5/15) is a sensational one that epitomises the framing of Joice Mujuru as a victim of systematic discrimination. The sensational allegations that the rejection of the tobacco has been due to “unclear circumstances” insinuates that there is an element of an unjust treatment and thereby leaving readers to conclude that Mujuru is being victimised. To amplify the victim image of Mujuru, the story “*Auction floors rejects Mujuru tobacco*” (5/5/15) makes a quick comparison with how she lost her government post by stating that she “lost her lofty government and ZANUPF posts as President Robert Mugabe’s deputy last December after being accused of plotting to oust the ZANUPF leader”. The story maintains that Mujuru is a victim although the tobacco bales were later accepted. The newspaper used a source which insisted that there were political motives in the alleged rejection. This unnamed source suspected that “it was somehow a political move which failed to succeed, the source close to the family said yesterday”. The reference to the use of the word “widow” in the statement “The sources said the widow of Zimbabwe’s first army General Solomon Mujuru had her tobacco delivery turned away by Tobacco Sales Floor Limited (TSF) without any explanation” seems calculated to highlight her vulnerability as a political widow who is at the mercy of powerful forces and without protection.



### 6.3.2 Preferred meanings

The story “*Auction floors rejects Mujuru tobacco (5/5/15)*” is meant to demonstrate that Mujuru is being victimised after the death of her husband and the victimisation is extended to the produce from a her farm. The alleged rejection of the tobacco is despite the fact that tobacco is the top earner of the much needed foreign currency in the country. This is meant to show readers that the victimisation of Mujuru is for everyone to see and judge.

“*Auction floors rejects Mujuru tobacco (5/5/15)*” seeks to exonerate Mujuru of all the allegations of incompetence, treason and corruption by showing that she is just a victim of plots by her enemies. In order to demonstrate her innocence, Mujuru is reported to have dared her accusers to prove the accusations in a court of law. To bring out the victim in Mujuru, *NewsDay* tried to present a picture of her as being under siege by stating that;

Some suspected security functionaries were intruding at her farm and that business limited her are under threat by noting that... various business investments linked to her have also fallen foul of hostile politics with some contracts being cancelled with some contacts being cancelled, while some executives have also been placed on surveillance on their movements to ensure that they do not interfere with her openly. “*Auction floors rejects Mujuru tobacco (5/5/15)*”.

From the above quote, Mujuru is depicted as a victim in terms of threats to her source of livelihood. There are attempts to isolate her from people that she interacts with as part of hostile politics perpetrated against her.

### 6.3.3 Omission analysis

The story “*Auction floors rejects Mujuru tobacco (5/5/15)*” paints a victim in Mujuru through the use of a sensational story with a misleading headline (Conboy 2006). The story “*Auction floors rejects Mujuru tobacco (5/5/15)*” states as a matter of fact that indeed Mujuru’s tobacco bales were rejected, which is not true. Whether by default or design, the headline resembles a tabloid technique of blowing things out of proportion to capture reader attention without making them knowledgeable but rather insults their intelligence (Sparks 2000 Franklin 1997, McNair 2001, Gripsrud 2000). “*Auction floors rejects Mujuru tobacco (5/5/15)*” also fails to fully furnish the reasons why the tobacco bales were initially rejected and simply assumes that there are political motives without evidence to support such assumptions as all the key people did not commit themselves to the version of the story advanced by *NewsDay*. What is also omitted is the reasons for writing such a story when all the affected people seem unmoved and unconcerned. It is probable that *NewsDay* was setting an agenda to convince readers that

ZANU PF is a bad party even to its own people. The story attempts to prepare readers to gravitate to opposition politics in the event that Mujuru decides to form an opposition political which she eventually did.

#### **6.3.4 Limiting debate**

Instead of informing readers fully on the alleged rejection of the tobacco bales, the story “*Auction floors rejects Mujuru tobacco (5/5/15)*” provides very scant details and relies on unnamed sources to make the claims. The affected and alleged victims; Mujuru and her daughter, refused to shed more light on the story while the manager of the tobacco auction floors expressed ignorance over the issue. Besides the need to peddle sensation and sympathise with Mujuru as victim, such a story should not have been published in a newspaper which describes itself as a quality daily or wants to be considered to be one of such a kind. This story exhibits the defining characteristics of a tabloidised press as it conforms to the desire by tabloids to sell sensation as noted by Sloan that;

No single factor has played a bigger role in the way today’s news media gather and display the news than the public’s timeless desire to be horrified, outraged, amazed, scandalised, infuriated and titillated (2001: 18).

It therefore follows that *NewsDay*, like tabloids, has recognised the eternal human desire for stimulation and excitement through peddling such sensational stories meant to maximise revenue. The fact that the affected people did not comment on the story could also mean that there might be some procedural issues that could have not been followed which affected any other farmer. Just because the farmer happens to be Mujuru, then a big political story was made out of it, which is not surprising as *NewsDay* consistently was fighting in Mujuru’s corner.

This kind of writing in the story “*Auction floors rejects Mujuru tobacco (5/5/15)*” does not add anything new in terms of informing readers about the character of Mujuru that would make them understand who she is and what she has to offer except to parade her a victim (Franklin 1997). The story rather, is just meant to enlist sympathy for Mujuru by writing half-truths blown out proportion and relying on speculative evidence.

Again, the story “*Auction floors rejects Mujuru tobacco (5/5/15)*” demonstrates the dangers of prioritising sensation over rational debate and also resembles the cheapness and vulgarity associated with tabloids (Gripsrud 2000). The adoption of sensation by *NewsDay* leads to the process of tabloidisation of the quality press, which has been blamed for the declining reputation of the press as a serious and helpful social institution (Merrill 1999) and provides

fuel for dangerous populist flames (Sparks 2000). Also the adoption of tabloid tactics such as sensationalisation, trivialisation, reliance on gossip and anonymous sources among others have been condemned for destroying the functions and purposes of journalism as noted by Bird that;

Tabloids and (Tabloidisation - my emphasis) represent a collective “demon” that tells the journalist profession that what journalist does is a distinctly more noble enterprise (1992:106).

Furthermore, the sensational writing using anonymous and speculative evidence, as demonstrated in the story “*Auction floors rejects Mujuru tobacco* ( 5/5/15), fits very well in(Bird 1992)definition of trash which is associated with tabloids in that;

First, trash connotes that which ought to be discarded, a sort of instant garbage; second it connotes cheapness, shoddiness, the overflow of the capitalist commodity system. Third, it connotes a superficial glitter designed to appeal to those whose tastes are ill-informed according to the dominant perspective - fourth, trash is excessive. It has more vulgarity, more tastelessness than is necessary for its own function as cheap commodity (Bird 1992:107).

In its bid to construct a political alternative through portraying Mujuru as a victim fighting for noble causes, *NewsDay* in the story “*Auction floors rejects Mujuru tobacco*” ( 5/5/15) resorted to sensationalist, uncouth and printing of outlandish claims that pander to the lowest common denominator of instinctive human desires (Ornebring and Jonsson 2004, Sparks 2000, Bakkes 1999).

In the construction of the victim frame,*NewsDay* also portrayed Mujuru and her allies as victims of ZANU PF factional wars with some stories such as “ *Goche flees for life...as Zanu PF saves Mutasa’s skin*” ( 24/11/14) where Goche is reported to have fled for dear life as youths wanted him to be charged for treason. *NewsDay* also dismissed the charges of treason on Goche as trumped up because there was no evidence to support the allegations. The victim frame is also brought about by Mujuru’s own allies in the story “*Mujuru allies cry foul*” (28/10/14) in which her sympathisers are said to have smelt a rat at the last minute cancellation of a state function where she had been invited as a guest speaker. The victim comes in that the postponement is perceived to have been “a calculated move to deny her an opportunity to hit back at First Lady Grace Mugabe who, two weeks ago, lampooned her for being allegedly inept, corrupt and a sell-out” “*Mujuru allies cry foul*” ( 28/10/14/Page 1). Through editorial cartoons *NewsDay* laid bare as to who was behind her alleged brutal ouster from ZANU PF as depicted below.



*NewsDay (11/12/14) (Figure 20)*

Mujuru is depicted in the above cartoon as a victim of First Lady Grace Mugabe's ruthlessness. The First Lady is portrayed as smiling at the grave with the epitaph J.T.R. Mujuru "where do broken hearts go, can they find their way home" from a song by the late Afro-American singer Whitney Houston. The perceived political death of Mujuru is depicted as having been done with tacit approval of President Mugabe, who appears in the corner waving the trademark clenched fist, ZANU PF's slogan, to show that he was part and parcel of the scheme which led to the political demise of Joice Mujuru. The depiction is meant to demonstrate that indeed Mujuru was a victim who deserves sympathy. The depiction fits well into *NewsDay's* conviction that Mujuru is a victim of ruthless and powerful forces which she could not withstand.

Furthermore, Mujuru is presented as a victim of her own ambitions in the story "*Mugabe detests ambitious people*" (11/12/14), which argues that Mujuru was fired from the government and ZANU PF because she was ambitious. On a positive note, the story brings out the views

of two identified analysts, although amplifying the victim framing, with one Blessing Vava arguing that “The moment he (Mugabe) suspects any ambitious opponents he thwarts them and it is unfortunate that the reasons for the sacking are flimsy because none of the ministers in the present cabinet including Mugabe himself have been performing”. Another analyst, Tamuka Chirimambowa, also argues that Mugabe had already wanted to fire them “I think the writing was on the wall and nothing much to talk about. These people are no angels for they are responsible for where Zimbabwe is”. *“Mugabe detests ambitious people” (11/12/14/ Page2)*

Other stories in the victim frame include *“Youths threaten anti-Mujuru shutout” (01/12/14)*, *Zanu PF congress to seal Mujuru, allies fate (29/11/14)* *“Zanu PF fires pro-Mujuru army chiefs” (15/04/15)* *“Mujuru booed...snubs national hero burial (08/12/14)* and *“Mujuru’s fate lies in Mugabe’s hands ( 21/11/14)*, *“Mujuru supporters denied food aid” (3/02/15)* and *“Zanu PF youths boo Mujuru ally” (29/01/15)*.

Another story that also builds up on the victim frame is *“ Police boss Chihuri vows to swop on Mujuru camp” (19/01/15)* which claims that Police Commissioner General Augustine Chihuri will swoop on Mujuru and other top officials accused of corruption. Chihuri did not mention Mujuru by name as he only said “let me assure you that the Zimbabwe Republic Police will leave no stone unturned in bringing all perpetrators of corruption to book”. *NewsDay* tried to link the story to statements made earlier by President Mugabe that all cabinet ministers and top civil servants involved in corruption risked prosecution and dismissal if there is incriminating evidence against them to show that Mujuru was a target of such victimisation and witch-hunting by inserting background information to the effect that;

Mujuru has repeatedly denied the allegations and the First Family has so far failed to provide evidence that she was corrupt and tried to assassinate Mugabe. *“Police boss Chihuri vows to swop on Mujuru camp” (19/01/15)*

What also comes clear in the coverage of Mujuru is that despite all the reports on corruption, she has not been arrested which might mean that there is no substance to the content of the stories. As such *NewsDay* stories can be interpreted as slanderous narratives which represent the “collective demon” (Bird 1992:106) associated with tabloids that contaminate the noble work that the press should be engaged with. This contamination is a manifestation of the disservice associated with tabloidisation (Sparks 2000).

In its sustained bid to underscore the victim frame *NewsDay* also included other stories such as *“State security behind Mujuru ouster” (20/01/15)* to demonstrate that she was a victim of larger and well co-ordinated schemes. Mujuru was thus portrayed as a victim of forces she could

not personally fight as state security apparatus was working against her and she was thus a victim of systematic planning.

#### **6.4 Implications of the framing of Joice Mujuru by *NewsDay***

The framing of Mujuru by *NewsDay* showed that the newspaper is undergoing the process of tabloidisation in terms of its news writing and presentation. Content analysis findings and respondent views show that *NewsDay* employed tabloid reporting styles such as subjectivity, sensationalism, use of large photographs, anonymous sources, dynamic layout, cheapness, vulgarity, exaggeration, trivialisation, simplification, printing of unconfirmed gossip, speculation and personification in its coverage of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF. All these attributes point towards the damaging process of tabloidisation as defined by (Esser 1999, Bird 2000, Kurtz 1993, Turner 2004, Kalb 1997 and Bakkes 1999).

The desire by *NewsDay* to project Mujuru as a moderate leader who could challenge for political power predisposed it to focus more on eliciting sympathy without interrogating and telling its readers why they should support her and what she had to offer to the electorate. *NewsDay* also never provided information on whether Mujuru was not guilty of all the charges that were levelled against her but instead sought to set an agenda and momentum for her to challenge for political office. The portrayal of Mujuru by *NewsDay* as a moderate also meant that more focus was on her as an individual than on what alternatives she could give and qualifying the perceived moderateness in her leadership (Bird 2000, Bakkes 1999). To further highlight the worrying trend towards the tabloidisation of the *NewsDay*, the following examples of tabloid reporting which were employed by *NewsDay* are given below.

##### **6.4.1 Dynamic layout**

*NewsDay* employed tabloid formatting styles such as the use of colour pages and dynamic layouts of using pictures bigger than the actual news article in order to visually attract audiences to either buy and or read the newspaper (Schonbach 2000). These aspects dominate all the stories written on Mujuru with some of them having just a picture on the front page and the story on the second page, for example, the story “*Mujuru attacks Mugabe*” (9/12/14). Also the story “*Bloodbath in Zanu PF, Jabulani Sibanda, 4 Chairs suspended*” (14/11/14) makes use of eye-catching colourful headlines and design to attract reader attention with the actual story on the second page. Other examples of stories larger than pictures include “*Mujuru skips politburo*” (27/11/14) and “*Goche flees for life as Mugabe saves Mutasa 'skin*” (24/11/14). Another tabloid aspect prevalent in *NewsDay*, which also limits the amount of information for

readers to fully understand, is that all its stories are very short coupled with the use of simplified language (Bird 2000). The result is that *NewsDay* failed to present a comprehensive picture of Mujuru even if it was sympathetic to her. It offered only what may be described as brief highlights with readers assumed to be less intelligent and told the story through the use of colourful graphics and pictures.

### 6.4.2 Editorialising

Another tabloid format employed by *NewsDay* in its framing of Joice Mujuru was the insertion of opinion in news stories, which is an undesirable attribute in news writing as opinion and fact should be clearly separated. Examples of editorialising include the story “*Women use violence, dirty tactics in outdoing each other – study*” (5/12/14). The story “*Women use violence, dirty tactics in outdoing each other – study*” (5/12/14) is based on a study conducted by the Research and Advocacy Unit and the Women’s Trust on the 2013 elections which concluded that female candidates violently fought each other through what was described as “Pull Her Down (PHD)” to destruct others from participating in politics, the story smuggles the statement that;

Lately First Lady Grace Mugabe used the same tactic to annihilate Vice President Joice Mujuru from Zanu PF and government. “*Women use violence, dirty tactics in outdoing each other – study*” (5/12/14/Page 6).

Also included in the story is a picture of President Mugabe, Joice Mujuru and Grace Mugabe with a caption entitled “(Grace (far right) is using the ‘pull her down’ tactics to annihilate Vice President Joice Mujuru (left) from ZANU PF and government”. All this editorialising was meant to show sympathy for Mujuru and at the same time being used as a marketing gimmick through selling exciting and sensational content. The rest of the story talks about the study of the 2013 elections with regards to how women outdid each other, by which the First Lady Grace Mugabe had not yet joined active politics in ZANU PF.

### 6.4.3 Sensationalism

*NewsDay* also resorted to sensationalisation in its coverage of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF. Examples of sensational reporting include the story “*Mujuru camp wants to kill me*” (25/10/14) where it published sensational claims by ZANU PF politician Monica Mutsvangwa that members of the Mujuru camp wanted to kill her. *NewsDay* relied on the victim, Monica Mutsvangwa, who sensationally claimed that “you will never kill me. You will never kill all of us. I am not afraid of dying. I have been intimidated many occasions that if I come to Manicaland I will die, I am not afraid”. “*Mujuru camp wants to kill me*” (25/10/14)

In the story “*Mujuru camp wants to kill me*” (25/10/14), *NewsDay* seemed just content with publishing the unprovoked claims based on the information from the alleged victim without informing the readers who in particular was threatening Mutsvangwa. It instead relied on unnamed sources as a basis for printing such sensational claims. The sensational approach by *NewsDay* negates its position as a quality newspaper and shows that it is gravitating towards tabloid style in terms of its stories as one respondent noted that;

Basically some stories that were published by *NewsDay* would never have seen the light of the day had *NewsDay* been a serious paper because to say the least, some of the stories that involved Mujuru were nothing but just rumours and speculation, they were stories that you would expect to see in tabloid papers like the *H-Metro*. I remember the other story which had to do with her being accused of sleeping with young to satisfy her need, that is not a story you would expect in mainstream paper but a tabloid. (Interview 13/5/17).

The comparison and distinction made by the respondent shows that readers also seem to be noticing the trend towards the tabloidisation of the press in Zimbabwe and that they understand how serious quality papers should deal with important issues like politics. The publication of exciting stories about sex are definitely tabloid diet which the serious press should not delve into because such details would not provide useful information (Sloan 2001, Ornebring and Jonsson 2004, Bird 2000).

#### **6.4.4 Use of anonymous sources**

*NewsDay* also made extensive use of suspicious and unnamed sources in its coverage of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANUPF and government. One such story which is based on suspicious sources in “*Zanu PF quashes Mujuru resignation reports*” (12/11/14) in which *NewsDay* was reacting to social media reports from a controversial online publication *Zimeye*, which had reported that Mujuru had resigned. The fact that a newspaper which describes itself as a quality daily ended up writing its stories based on suspicious social media sources is also an indicator that some of the stories that it publishes could also be based on fake sources or suspicious ones drawn from social media. The use of anonymous sources in news stories raises questions over the credibility and authenticity of such stories as questions hang over why the sources are hiding their identities.

The almost prevalent use of anonymous sources in political news may lead to the suspicion that some of the stories are manufactured to frame a political candidate in a certain way. Such kind of stories include the story “*Auction floors rejects Mujuru tobacco*” (05/05/15), which despite being sensationalised is based on what are described as impeccable sources despite the



alleged victim, Joice Mujuru, her daughter Nyasha (responsible for the business unit) and the Tobacco Sales Floor (TSF) general manager who should have commented on the issue all expressing ignorance over the issue. This shows how a newspaper can go out of its way to project an image that it desires and push an agenda in disregard of journalism ethics to manufacture a fictitious story, a practice that is normal for tabloids.

Although some respondents agreed to the use anonymous sources in news stories, they argued that, if anonymous sources become a daily dosage it can be an indicator that the stories could be fictitious especially in the Zimbabwean context by noting that although;

The use of anonymous sources is a standard practice in journalism but one begins to question the use of the unnamed people when each and every story involving a certain character is associated with faceless characters. I do not think ethics were and are being followed in how the Mujuru issue is covered. The issue of disservice again comes in as I believe that a story should have has real person as compared to the unknown characters. A story that has names of people as sources is more credible than a daily dosage of unknown sources which gain will raise suspicions on whose interests the papers are advancing. (Interview 23/5/17).

The persistent use of anonymous sources in stories of huge proportions such as Joice Mujuru raises questions on what the agenda the stories have, especially when the stories are biased in her favour. It may be that *NewsDay* could have had some inducements to sway public opinion in favour of Mujuru as part of a grand plan to raise her profile as the next leader of the country and end up creating such stories to that end in light of the sentiments by respondents that *NewsDay* has always supported anyone who opposes ZANU PF and President Mugabe.

#### **6.4.5 Individualisation**

In its coverage of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF, *NewsDay* exhibited the tabloid style of focusing on the individual and ignoring the subject matter (Bakkes 1999, Kurtz 1996). The articles on Mujuru were highly personified as they focused on her person and not on telling the readers whether she was guilty of the allegations of being inept, corrupt and treasonous but the focus was more on her as an individual rather than on what she could offer to the people of Zimbabwe. Mujuru was simply presented as the solution to all the ills facing the country, with little explanation of how she could extricate Zimbabwe from the myriad of challenges confronting it. The personification of Mujuru is described by one respondent as a tragedy that is facing the media in Zimbabwe hence its failure to articulate issues of public interest in Zimbabwe because;

There is no doubt that the biggest tragedy confronting our country is the creation of personality cults, for instance, in ZANU PF it's President Robert Mugabe alone while in the MDC-T it is Morgan Tsvangirai and no one else. The media has also fallen into this trap where personalities come over content and ideas. When Joice Mujuru was being torn apart no one bothered to probe if that brought any production or food on the table. There was no reportage to do with the risk rating of the country and the ripple effects of such politicism (sic) and how it affects the economy. Even today as the media reports about the seemingly unending bank queues and the general economic decline, the media has failed to locate the root of that problem which is the ugly divisions in the ruling party. In short, standards have declined because journalists are now pawns in power struggles within political parties while developmental issues are ignored and abandoned. Unfortunately, the media cannot provide readers with information to make informed choices because it focuses on trivial issues over real and compelling issues. Informed voting decisions can now only be provided by the social media where citizen journalism, where the ills of our society and our country are highlighted and debated. (*Interview 13/3/17*).

The sentiments expressed in the above quote have serious ramifications beyond providing evidence that *NewsDay* has become tabloidised by focusing more on personalities instead of the issue at hand. If citizens are to rely on the social media for information, then the mainstream press would become irrelevant and dysfunctional in the Zimbabwean society. Furthermore, the media seem to have been hijacked across the ownership divide and have virtually abdicated on their roles of being watchdogs and as the Fourth estate in society.

## **6.5 Exceptions to tabloidised reporting by *NewsDay***

Although *NewsDay* reporting largely conformed to tabloid styles in terms of language and presentation in its sympathetic framing of Joice Mujuru, it was objective in some of its reports. Such stories that demonstrate objective reporting include the story "*Mujuru will disappears*" (27/03/15), which reported that the will of the late general Solomon Mujuru disappeared under mysterious circumstances and that Vice President Mujuru was and refused to provide the family with a copy to expedite the registration of the estate. The story "*Mujuru will disappears*" (27/03/15) also notes the possibility that there is "suspicion that the ownership of the late general's properties could have been secretly changed to deny the inheritance to Bianca and Tendai (General Mujuru's children sired with another wife).

The story "*Mujuru will disappears*" (27/03/15) shows that Mujuru has a dark side which points to corruption and cruelty, despite the general framing to portray her as a victim and a future leader. Such exceptions show that in terms of *NewsDay* reporting there are some glimpses of hope that some objectivity is still possible even if the newspaper was bidding and setting an

agenda for Mujuru to be a political leader who could deliver the country from its socio-economic challenges. This tabloid aspect is also captured by one respondent who made a comparison between the three national dailies, *The Herald*, *NewsDay* and *Daily News* albeit in a polarised media environment by noting that;

The polarisation of the Zimbabwean media is now a matter of record. State-controlled papers such as *The Herald* are propaganda tools for the ruling party while privately-owned newspapers have thrown their weight behind opposition politics. Whereas *The Herald* sensationalises its reporting on behalf of the ruling party, the *Daily News* does the exact opposite. Its coverage of Mujuru was therefore as sensational as *The Herald's* but only in the exact opposite verbiage. *NewsDay* tried a more neutral, middle-of-the-road approach but it was clear it was opposed to Grace's Mugabe's ascendancy to power and her modus operandi. When the media are polarised they get entrenched in their positions and begin to fail to sift fact from fiction. I think all these newspapers were guilty of non-objective reporting and interpretation of the events leading to Mujuru's ouster. (Interview 24/03/17).

While sensationalism was the defining characteristic of the reportage of the coverage of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF, *NewsDay* exhibited the less extreme of the other newspapers although it was biased in favour of Mujuru as the worthy candidate while being cynical of the rise of First Lady Grace Mugabe to active politics in ZANU PF.

## 6.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to analyse the framing of the coverage of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF and government by the *NewsDay* newspaper from October 2014 up to January 2017 when she had proved beyond doubt that she was now an opposition political party leader in Zimbabwe.

In coming up with different frames as in the previous chapter, a representative story was selected for analysis to reveal the salient aspects of each frame using four categories namely; words and symbols - where an analysis of the article would reveal whether the framing is negative or positive, preferred meanings – which would reveal the intended meanings that *NewsDay* sought in the audience, omission analysis – where an analysis of what the framing could have omitted or suppressed in the discourse of telling and finally limiting debate - where an analysis of what could have been left out in the story could either limit the debate in the way the framing was done.

This chapter has demonstrated how *NewsDay* framed the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANUPF and the government by setting an agenda of propping Mujuru as a moderate leader

presentable to Zimbabweans. The propping up was buttressed by framing her as a victim worth sympathising with, much akin to campaigning for her without really informing readers who Mujuru was and what she has to offer politically, a point noted by one former private newspaper editor who said;

*NewsDay* did massive public relations campaign to portray in good light Zimbabwe People First (ZPF) everyday with a story coming from either Didymus Mutasa, Rugare Gumbo. Sadly none of the stories gave an insight into what ZPF stood for, promising the electorate how it can make Zimbabwe better. Mai Mujuru has failed dismally to put across her mission for Zimbabwe and a political message from where she is coming from. *NewsDay* journalists could have been paid to promote the third force or were trying to set an agenda (*Interview 05/05/17*).

What the above sentiments also point to is that fact that there could be an aspect of bribery of some journalists, judging by the massive reporting which amounted to a sustained campaign to create goodwill for Mujuru's party ZPF before its split using two key figures in the form of Didymus Mutasa and Rugare Gumbo.

In its framing of the expulsion of Mujuru from ZANU PF, *NewsDay* employed tabloid techniques, mainly being motivated by the need to capture audiences and attract advertisers. A subeditor with Alpha Media Holdings (AMH), which publishes *NewsDay*, admitted that *NewsDay* in most cases uses a picture bigger than the article in typical tabloid format (Bakkes 1999, Schonbach 2000). The chief reason was to maximise sales and attract audiences and advertisers with the stories being published without comments from the requisite sources (*Interview 06/04/17*). This aspect seems to reflect the argument that market pressures dictate that newspapers should focus on profitable stories which draw readers to collect advertisers as inexpensively as possible (Sampson 1996).

It may thus suffice to note that competition to beat deadlines may be one of the motivating factors that led to tabloidisation of news at *NewsDay*. The sub editor also confirmed that it is the editors who decide on the headlines and banners and insist that in most cases they had to use an attractive headline laced with colourful pictures to attract readers. Such a scenario also points to the fact that in the Zimbabwean and European contexts, where tabloidisation has been noticed, market pressures can thus "dictate some changes in layout and tone to appeal to reader and advertiser concerns" (McNair 2001:44), which naturally leads to the dumping down of news. A former private news editor also confirmed that tabloidisation of the media in Zimbabwe is due to the fight for the elusive revenue dollars in a declining economy by arguing that;

The biggest problem in Zimbabwe is making a paper sell, every editor is concerned with profitability and the elements of tabloidisation naturally creep in and with most newspapers having a print run of 5 000 one needs to bring a return and in order to do so there is a need to craft an enticing headline that makes the public buy the newspaper and thus ethics are disregarded, the bottom line is making a sale. (Interview 05/05/17).

It also appeared that the stiff competition to get revenue and survive in the debilitating economy in Zimbabwe also saw newspapers resorting to anything that sells and one such product was “everything that is against Mugabe sells whether it’s newsworthy or not hence the capitalisation of such an opportunity (Mujuru expulsion) by such newspapers as *NewsDay* (Interview 23/05/17). This represents typical gutter journalism which short-changes readers (Sampson 1996). Another worrying trend is that respondents were equating newspapers like *NewsDay* to some suspicious and gossip online newspapers especially in their coverage of the Mujuru expulsion mainly driven by the profit motive by noting that;

I would say the papers deviated from their core business and operated like the unregulated online media which is bent on monetising content one would not differentiate between newzimbabwe, [myzimbabwe.com](http://myzimbabwe.com), Zimeye among many other online newspapers. (30/05/17).

The framing analysis of the *NewsDay* articles revealed three main frames; moderate leader, sympathetic and victim frames which however were not confined to a single story but intersected in almost all the stories. All these frames are interconnected as they reinforced each other with overlapping aspects. The sympathetic and victim frames were specifically deployed to buttress the moderate leader frame which sought to convince readers and citizens that Joice Mujuru is a leader for the future who could appeal to them mainly because she had the liberation war credentials which were lacking in MDC T leader Morgan Tsvangirai. Such a drive to position Mujuru as a future leader was not made secret as shown in the story “*Zimbos and their sway to Mujuru’s side*” (02/12/14), which argued in its lead paragraph that;

So what is happening now is that the majority of Zimbabweans have now opted to sympathise with Mujuru. She has been labelled as “corrupt”, “not fit to hold the post of VP”, “a gossip”, “demonic”, “jealous and divisive”, “unfit for consumption by flies and dogs”, among a litany of pejoratives used by her erstwhile comrades among the hordes of all sort of names. But she has not given up. “*Zimbos and their sway to Mujuru’s side*” (02/12/14).

The story concludes by sensationally claiming again that Mujuru is a better leader and the solution to the economic challenges in the country by stating that “Many a Zimbabwean feel

she is the better of devils in the ruling party. They feel maybe her connections with the whites will bring back major investments into the country”.

The drive to push for the acceptance of Mujuru by *NewsDay* led it to resort to tabloid styles which naturally led to the provision of more but less useful information on the part of the citizens in terms of making decisions based on a full understanding of who Mujuru really is politically and thereby taking a plunge into the tabloidisation of news (Esser 1999, Sparks 2000). The coverage by *NewsDay* was conformed to be the tabloid technique which is less to inform than to elicit sympathy (Franklin 1997). The next chapter will conclude the key findings of the research and offer recommendations in terms of the tabloidisation of the press in Zimbabwe.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 7.0 Introduction

The aim of the study was to establish whether or not the decline in journalism performance and standards in Zimbabwe can be attributed to tabloidisation. The phenomenon described in this study as tabloidisation entails that the media is gravitating away from broadsheet newspaper norms to tabloid journalism. Tabloids are known for pandering to the lowest common denominator; trivialisation, sensationalism, concentrating more on scandals, peddling news of shock value; gossip and infotainment (Örnebring and Johnson 2004).

The study was necessitated by the ever-growing concerns about the decline of the standards of journalism in Zimbabwe. The main objective of the study was to assess whether or not the media is becoming tabloidised in its coverage of political news. A critical investigation of the root causes as well as the symptoms of the decline was carried out through the analysis of stories focusing the depiction of Joice Mujuru in *The Herald*, *Daily News* and *NewsDay*. The three national daily newspapers were selected because they covered the expulsion of Joice Mujuru extensively and on a daily basis. They also come from the three main newspaper stables in the country with *The Herald* (state owned), *Daily News* (privately owned – Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ)) and *NewsDay* (privately owned – Alpha Media Holdings) and thus are representative of the print media landscape in the country. The analysis of stories from the three newspapers is sufficient to reach a conclusion on whether the Zimbabwean press is undergoing the damaging process of tabloidisation or not. The specific objectives of the study were to;

- Examine whether the framing of Mujuru's expulsion from ZANU PF in selected newspapers was based on factual or sensational reporting.
- Establish forces motivating the tabloidisation of political news and discourses in contemporary Zimbabwe.
- Examine the standards of journalism in Zimbabwe, focusing on the framing of Mujuru's expulsion from ZANU PF in selected newspapers; *The Herald*, *Daily News* and *NewsDay*, as a point of reference.

To fulfil the aim of the study, a qualitative research methodology was employed. A qualitative methodology enables the collection of a lot of data, capturing of all elements of an event to allow for a full description (Becker 1996, Sandelowski 2000). Semi-structured in-depth

interviews were conducted to either confirm or invalidate the findings from the qualitative content analysis of the newspaper articles and also to establish the motivating factors of tabloidisation of political discourses in the selected newspapers. The study focused on three leading national dailies namely *The Herald*, *Daily News* and *NewsDay* from October 2014 up to January 2017. The period of the study covered the time when the factional fights in ZANU PF were becoming intense from early November 2014 to April 2015. This was the time when Mujuru who was still the Vice- President, was expelled from the party and until she formed her own political party as an opposition leader.

Furthermore, the study was underpinned by an eclectic three-pronged theoretical framework informed by the media framing theory, agenda setting and the concept of the public sphere. The analysis of frames in news stories is critical because news frames present a persistent pattern of cognition, interpretation and presentation of selection, emphasis and exclusion by which media discourse is organised for the construction of social reality (Goffman 1974, Gitlin 1980, Gamson and Modigliani 1989, Entman 1993, McQuail 1994, Tankard 2001, Butler 2009). Framing analysis is critical when analysing news articles in terms of tabloidisation. This is so since tabloidisation is characterised by declining standards of journalism through the adoption and spill over of tabloid formatting to the quality press, the conversion of news into entertainment (Esser 1999, Turner 2004, Sparks 2000, Franklin 1997), prevalent use of simplistic language and dynamic layout of content (Bird 2000). All these processes involve a form of framing in the writing of the news.

Furthermore, frames in news are important because they may affect learning and evaluations of issues and events and this affects both at individual and societal levels. At individual level it may result in altered attitude about the issue mainly based on the exposure to certain frames, while at the level of society frames contribute to the shaping of social processes such as political socialisation, decision making and collective actions (de Vreese 2005). Through the use of framing, the study was able to establish that the coverage of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF by *The Herald*, *Daily News* and *NewsDay* was characterised by the adoption of tabloid formatting and styles.

Through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a representative story for each frame from the selected newspapers was analysed. CDA allowed the study of the language and power in terms of discourse and ideology. The assumption was that the news stories contain political goals or agendas which are biased towards a particular ideology, especially in terms of choices of quotes



used, naming of sources, perspective from which the story is written, and what is omitted, which all forms the overall portrayal by the story and the resultant frame (Johnstone 2008). In doing CDA, the context was identified as critical with regards to the three levels; macro, meso and micro. The micro allowed for the examination of the issues at the time when the stories were written. At the meso level, focus was on the context of the production and reception of the stories, while the micro level focus allowed for the analysis of the actual words used in the stories in terms of the linguistic devices used to depict the ideas (Caldas – Coulthard and Coulthard 1996, Richardson 2007).

A representative story was selected for analysis to reveal the salient aspects of each frame using four categories namely; words and symbols. The analysis of the article would reveal or identify the kinds of words and symbols associated with the treatment of Mujuru at a particular historical time. Preferred meanings – which would reveal the intended meanings that particular newspaper sought the audience to consider as natural or the only possible interpretation of a story – were also considered. Omission analysis assumed that a story is a construction which privileges certain meanings and not others. The gist of omission analysis was to explore what was left or remained unsaid, or silenced or prevented from manifesting because of a choice of particular words and symbols and not others that would have created possible alternative meanings. The implication of the fact that a story can say more from what it does not openly narrate than from what it says suggests that particular ways of reporting can limit debate over other possible views on the same story. The phenomenon of limiting debate thus implies a deliberate critique of what could have been left out in the story in the way the framing was done.

The study established the following frames from the selected newspapers; putschists cabal, traitor/economic saboteur, incompetent/simpleton, corrupt, false war legend, regime change agent, greedy, cruel stepmother, sympathetic, victim, brave leader, mature leader, counter frame, grand coalition, moderate frames. The content of each of these frames will be elaborated later in this chapter

## **7.1 Research findings**

Tabloidisation has been attributed to the increasing commercialism and commercialisation of the media sphere, dumping down to appeal to targeted audiences, prioritisation of profits over public service quest, abandonment of journalism standards punctuated by more emphasis on the more attractive, entertaining stories and the marginalisation of objective journalism and

critical issues (Franklin 1997, Barnett 1998, Esser 1999, Sparks and Tulloch 2000, McNair 2001, Harris 2006).

Technological advancements that allow journalists to produce stories within a short period of time which compromises their ability to check facts, coupled by reliance on entertainment-oriented public relations generated content have also been given as reasons for the trend towards tabloidisation (Barnett 1998). Instead of reactivating and re-invigorating the public sphere with new information, technology has fuelled tabloidisation by eroding the role of media as watchdog. The net result is the debasing of the standards of journalism by diminishing the capacity of a civil discourse (Sparks 2000).

In the United States of America tabloidisation has been caused by the internationalisation and deregulation of media ownership and content. The result is that there is a prevalence of free market and profit-oriented owners who pursue whatever sells (Sparks 2000). Such a scenario results in the subordination of news values to commercial values (Schudson 1995). The control of editorial policies by owners such as Rupert Murdoch on the *Sun*, mergers and takeovers in the late 1980s also led to newspapers considering the financial aspects more than anything else (Blumner and Gurevitch 1995). The spread of tabloidisation is a reflection of a situation where the “bad” is pushing out the “good” (Williams 2003:30). Due to tabloidisation, news stories are now “bright, light and trite”, shorter with more pictures, simpler and less wordy and there has been a rise of what is described as sound bite journalism where more pictures and entertainment get more priority over serious newspapers, prestigious news bulletins and current affairs programmes (Williams 2003:231). Tabloidisation has also seen a retreat in investigative journalism with a shift towards “soft” and “light” news (Franklin 1997:4).

In examining whether or not the decline in journalism performance and standards in Zimbabwe can be attributed to tabloidisation three questions derived from the research objectives of the study were asked;

- **The first question was: How did *The Herald*, *Daily News* and *NewsDay* frame the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF and government?**

In responding to this question in the analysis of *The Herald* articles on the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF, it was found out that the newspaper was entirely negative and reproachful in its framing. The analysis of this newspaper also revealed predominantly derisive and pejorative frames which reflected the factional and power struggles within the party at the

time. The frames included the putschists cabal frame, in which Mujuru was depicted as leading a cabal seeking to oust President Mugabe from power through the alleged assassination plots by her allies such as Rugare Gumbo, Didymus Mutasa and Nicholas Goche. These allegations were also emphasised in other frames such as the traitor/economic saboteur frame. In this frame Mujuru is accused of betraying both the president and the country by associating with what are perceived to be the enemies of the country identified as Britain, European Union and The United States of America. Furthermore, Mujuru was also framed as a simplistic thinker who cannot handle issues to do with statecraft, a corrupt person who abused her position in government to further the business interests of her family, an agent of regime change who colluded with hostile Western countries against ZANU PF and a greedy and cruel stepmother who enjoys the suffering of children sired by her late husband with other women by refusing to execute General Mujuru's Will. In the false war legend frame, Joice Mujuru is described as an impostor riding on a stolen image of war heroics to catapult herself into various beneficial positions in the ZANUPF party and government. All these frames are interconnected as they reinforced each other with overlapping aspects but the most common thread is that they served to amplify that Mujuru wanted to take over power at all costs and should be ejected and rejected by ZANU PF supporters.

The negative framing of Joice Mujuru is due to *The Herald's* position in Zimbabwean politics as a willing tool and a mouthpiece of the ruling ZANU PF party. The newspaper is controlled by the Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services through the permanent secretary who claims to speak on behalf of the President. Through the 51% shareholding that the Zimbabwean government has in Zimpapers (the publishers of *The Herald*), successive information ministers have exercised direct editorial control especially since the year 2000 when the information ministry was brought under the Office of the President. *The Herald* is deployed as an attack dog against the perceived machinations of a Western inspired regime change agenda after the country embarked on the Land Reform Programme. It is *The Herald* which defines the preferred Zimbabwean position every time and it has no restrictions in terms of circulation in the country where other private newspapers are regarded as opposition and are "banned" in ZANU PF rural strongholds. Therefore the newspaper has considerable influence in ZANU PF politics and once it said Mujuru was traitor, ZANU PF supporters would merely read it as such.

The other basis for the negative framing was that *The Herald* reportage was hijacked by a faction that wanted Mujuru to be eliminated from ZANU PF by any means necessary. Such sentiments pointed to the fact that there was a possibility of a political hand from other factional leaders. The minister of information at the time was Professor Jonathan Moyo, who dictated the framing of Mujuru at *The Herald* through negative images. From the qualitative analysis of the actual stories, it became clear that *The Herald* was considered a willing tool of a faction in ZANU PF that amplified the alleged Mujuru flaws to justify rejecting and ejecting her. The negative images of Mujuru floated by the official newspaper were meant to make the readers view Mujuru as a political villain and not the victim of political machinations of succession battles within ZANU PF. The framing also sought to justify her expulsion in the public eyes. Again the framing of Mujuru by *The Herald* demonstrates that tabloidisation has the potential to corrupt media practice and also highlights that the potential dangers of the trivialisation of stories of huge political significance are phenomenal if objectivity is replaced by subjectivity and trivialisation (McNair: 2001). In this study, *The Herald* probably presents the worst by turning itself into a platform for mass deception and character assassination through brazen and unethical practices which border on belittling the intelligence of its readers.

In contrast to *The Herald's* malignant regime of negative images of Mujuru, the *Daily News* framed the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF and the government by adopting an overallly sympathetic framing which led to blind support for her. In the sympathetic frame, Mujuru was presented as a defenceless widow deserving public sympathy after what is described as a brutal ouster from ZANU PF by powerful forces led by President Mugabe and his wife. The *Daily News* sought to portray her as a victim of ZANU PF fights led by First Lady Grace Mugabe at the instigation of President Mugabe, in the victim frame. In an effort to prop her as viable political alternative, the *Daily News* portrayed Joice Mujuru as a new, brave and formidable leader who could challenge President Mugabe in the political field. Also linked to the perceived bravery Mujuru is portrayed as a moderate and mature leader with qualities that show both, experience, maturity, moderation, reconciliatory and a developmental disposition and therefore worth considering as a viable opposition leader. The *Daily News* also sought to defend Mujuru by countering the pejorative framing by *The Herald* in the counter frame. The fight over the expulsion of Mujuru from ZANU PF became a battleground between the two publications, with much disregard to media ethics and the need to offer meaningful debate to their readers. Finally, the *Daily News* tried to push for the formation of a political coalition of opposition political parties that would challenge ZANU PF and dislodge President

Mugabe from power in the grand coalition frame. The grand coalition frame is built around the possibility of a coalition of all political parties led by either Joice Mujuru or Morgan Tsvangirai.

The analysis of the stories showed that they were primed to endear the reader to Mujuru. The frames overlapped and reinforced each other as they were not confined to a single story but intersected in almost all the stories. The most common thread is that the victim, brave leader, mature leader, and counter frames served to amplify the sympathy for Mujuru as an unfortunate defenceless widow and victim of President Mugabe and his wife Grace Mugabe, especially after the death of her husband. The *Daily News* also sought to portray her as a political giant who could wrestle power from President Mugabe. Overall, the framing of Mujuru by the *Daily News* was a sympathetic one and is so doing the *Daily News* resorted to tabloid styles in a bid to sympathise with her and concentrated on reacting to what *The Herald* was writing about her instead of telling readers whether or not she was guilty of the charges laid against her. The *Daily News*' framing presents a different kind of tabloidisation by pushing at all costs the image of a brave leader in Mujuru who is ready to challenge President Mugabe and one who needs sympathy from readers. The *Daily News* only provides information that seeks to exonerate Mujuru of the corruption allegations but fails to openly critique her capabilities in terms of leadership and economic programme. The newspaper maintains a blind hero-worshipping style of trying to whip up support for her as someone opposing ZANU PF and expending its energies on a possible coalition between Mujuru and Morgan Tsvangirai. It thus relies on stereotyping which extols one side of the phenomenon at the expense of the complicated image of a human being.

*NewsDay* framed the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF and the government by vigorously trying to set an agenda of propping Mujuru as a moderate leader presentable to Zimbabweans. The propping up was buttressed by framing her as a victim worth sympathising with. This kind of framing was akin to campaigning for her without really informing readers who Mujuru was and what she has to offer politically.

The analysis of the *NewsDay* stories revealed three main mutually reinforcing frames. The first is moderate leader, in this framing Joice Mujuru is presented as a viable political alternative to succeed President Mugabe. The attributes of a moderate leader connotes a person who is amenable to growth of business and accepts western investment without any pre-conditions.

The second is the sympathetic frame and its main thrust is to elicit sympathy for Joice Mujuru by portraying her as defenceless widow who was being persecuted for no justifiable cause by her rivals in ZANU PF. The third frame is the victim frame which emphasised the perception of Mujuru as a victim of factional politics in ZANU PF. She is portrayed as vulnerable, especially when her husband General Solomon Mujuru was no longer there to protect her. The portrayal of Mujuru as a victim is linked to the overall framing of her as worth sympathising with and also as a moderate leader who is being punished for entertaining hopes of becoming the president of Zimbabwe.

It is important to show that the study argued that these frames were not confined to a single story but intersected in almost all the stories. The sympathetic and victim frames were specifically deployed to buttress the moderate leader frame which sought to convince readers and citizens that Joice Mujuru is a leader for the future who could appeal to them mainly because she had the liberation war credentials which were lacking in long-time opposition leader MDC T leader Morgan Tsvangirai. Despite the pronouncement that *NewsDay* will seek to present facts in an objective manner, the coverage of Joice Mujuru has shown that the newspaper has abandoned its commitments in favour of sensation as a survival technique to capture reader attention and sell copy (McNair 2001). The result of such an approach is the capitalisation of emotion around the vulnerability of Mujuru after the death of her husband and creating a stereotype that she is being persecuted because she has ambitions to be the president. The other stereotype that *NewsDay* peddles is that Mujuru is the economic messiah for Zimbabwe which presents a de-contextualisation and personification of a complex issue (Bakkes 1999).

- **The second question of the study was: To what extent was the expulsion of Joice Mujuru sensationalised in the three selected newspapers?**

The results of the content analysis of the stories demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that *The Herald* employed tabloid reporting styles such as subjectivity, sensationalism, use of large photographs, manipulation, use of sources of fictitious and low credibility sources, publishing of falsehoods, emotionally appealing language and extensive descriptions, editorialising of news stories, printing of unconfirmed gossip and outlandish claims, use of unidentified sources, dramatisation, information distortion, exaggeration, trivialisation, simplification, personification in its coverage of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF. In the corrupt frame, *The Herald* resorted to plagiarism and printing outright lies all in an effort to make sure that Mujuru was seen as undesirable and unfit to be a member of ZANU PF party. Again in the

putschists cabal, the newspaper resorted to innuendo and fictitious sources to allege that Mujuru's allies were plotting to assassinate President Mugabe, to the extent that they were planning such activities and could possibly manipulate the security of the country. Also in the traitor/economic saboteur frame *The Herald* trivialises and exaggerates the facts and presumes readers to be gullible enough to believe that Mujuru was entirely responsible for the collapse of all the parastatals in the country and the smooth implementation of the ZIMASET economic blueprint. *The Herald* frames such as putschists cabal, traitor/economic saboteur, incompetent/simpleton, corrupt, false war legend, regime change agent, greedy and cruel stepmother contain tabloid formatting styles which point towards the damaging process of tabloidisation as defined by (Turner 2004, Bakkes 1999).

The findings of the study show that *The Herald* is undergoing a process of tabloidisation and drifting away from the expectations of a serious broadsheet journalism newspaper. The adoption of tabloid journalism techniques by the broadsheet journalism newspapers is considered a contamination which is associated with the decline of journalism standards (Bek2004, Conboy 2005, and Glyn 2000). The confusion of broadsheet and tabloid subjects is associated with fears that broadsheet and tabloid journalism will become indistinguishable and resulting in dumping down or tablodisation (McNair 1998). Such characterisation seems to be the case in *The Herald's* coverage of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF and government. The subjectivity and sensationalism exhibited by *The Herald* is a reflection of the control of the editorial by forces outside the newsroom who dictate what they think is the official position regardless of the facts on the ground. The content of the stories do not reflect the abilities of its journalists but what the wielders of power dictate in terms of official correctness. The tabloidisation is beyond the control of professional journalists who work at *The Herald* and reflects the conversion of the newspaper into a lapdog by those who exert editorial control in pursuit of factional politics in ZANU PF.

In contrast to *The Herald* the response to question two reveals that the framing of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF by the *Daily News* did not conform to expected standards of a serious broadsheet newspaper. This is so because of the high level of sensationalisation and the deployment of innuendo and anonymous sources which point towards tabloidisation (Sloan 2001). The framing of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF and government by the *Daily News* was characterised by the use of tabloid formatting and styles such as the use of unidentified sources, sensational wording, printing of speculation, and editorialising, and use of colour pages with photographs larger than the stories. These modes of representing Mujuru

were found to be misleading to the readers because the attention getting headlines, focussed on the individual rather than the subject matter, and less weight on in-depth analysis and political debate (Bakkes 1999, Schonbach 2000).

The *Daily News* did not rise above just trying to oppose *The Herald's* framing of the Mujuru ouster, but failed to provide alternative perspectives that could enable citizens to make informed political decisions on what Mujuru has to offer as a politician. Just as in the case of *The Herald*, the *Daily News* is undergoing the damaging process of tabloidisation. The implication on democracy is that with the kinds of framing from the *Daily News*, democratic debate on issues that affect people is limited and sometimes even omitted or ignored. Thus, the democratic expectations of the media in the creation of rational public sphere necessary for an enlightened and informed citizenry is undermined.

The overly sympathetic framing of Mujuru by the *Daily News* predisposed it to focus more on eliciting sympathy for her as a victim. The study found out that this frame of victimhood obscured real issues such as accusations of plotting to assassinate President Mugabe, corruption and extortion, working against the interests of ZANU PF by leading divisive factional politics which bordered on regime change. This encouraged a de-contextualised portrayal of Mujuru and a projection of her individualism by entirely focusing on her person instead of the allegations she was facing in ZANU PF (Bird 2000, Bakkes 1999). Such attributes of the newspaper demonstrate that it adopted tabloid rather than broadsheet journalism formatting and therefore confirming the argument that the *Daily News* is undergoing the process of tabloidisation (Bird 1992, Franklin 1997). The implications are that informed debate is stalled if not obfuscated.

The depiction of Mujuru as a victim who needed sympathy was also a result of the polarity that exists in the Zimbabwean media. The *Daily News* fixated public and private readers on few themes which are a form of political jingoism and the end result is the trivialisation of the allegations that Joice Mujuru was facing in ZANU PF.

*NewsDay* attempted to frame Mujuru in a different way by depicting her as a moderate leader who could deliver Zimbabwe out of the economic quagmire. The drive to push for the acceptance of Mujuru as an acceptable and moderate leader by *NewsDay* led it to resort to tabloid styles such as subjectivity and emotionalism through actively trying to elicit sympathy (Bakkes 1999, Franklin 1997) for her by depicting her as a defenceless innocent widow who is



ruthlessly crushed for being ambitious enough to dream of leading the country. These frames were meant to naturally predispose readers to understand the Mujuru plight from a single perspective. The stories were not incisive enough to impart to citizens the power to make decisions based on a full understanding of who Mujuru really is politically and thereby taking a plunge into the tabloidisation of news. (Esser 1999, Sparks 2000). In this regard, *NewsDay*, actually succeeded in foreclosing debate on critical national themes of democracy, rule of law, land, corruption and setting an inclusive transformative agenda.

The desire by *NewsDay* to project Mujuru as a moderate leader who could challenge for political power predisposed it to focus more on eliciting sympathy without interrogating and telling its readers why they should support her and what she had to offer to the electorate. *NewsDay* also did not provide information on whether Mujuru was not guilty of all the charges that were levelled against her but instead sought to set an agenda and a momentum for her to challenge for political office. The portrayal of Mujuru by *NewsDay* as also meant that more focus was on her as an individual than on what alternatives she could give and qualifying the perceived moderateness in her leadership (Bird 2000, Bakkes 1999). It seems that *NewsDay* presents a narrow definition of the moderateness of Mujuru. The moderateness is only defined in terms of perceived links with Western countries who are presumed to offer viable economic options to Zimbabwe in comparison with Chinese investment. Furthermore, the moderateness of Mujuru is meant to satisfy the interests of big business only and the assumption is that with economic growth everything will fall into place. This is a rather fallacious assumption. Again the assumption and perception that Mujuru is a moderate has no basis as she had not proved it in practice since she was only deputising President Mugabe during her stay in government, unless *NewsDay* insinuates that Mujuru was leading a parallel government.

- **The third question of the study was: What are the main forces leading to the dearth of serious/factual reporting and exacerbating tabloidisation of political news in Zimbabwe?**

The analysis of *The Herald* revealed that the dearth of serious news was attributed to the desire to concentrate on what sells or what readers feel about a subject. Such an approach points towards sensational news which favour the exciting over the informational (Franklin 1997). The media in Zimbabwe is gravitating towards tabloid journalism due to the cut-throat

competition with online publications in a shrinking economy. As a result of this competition newspapers have resorted to sensationalism as way to attract readers to buy copy instead of publishing factual stories. The publishing of sensational news that titillates the mind is a result of a media that is operating in an economy where the marginal propensity to spend is fast diminishing, resulting in fierce competition for readers buy selling sensation (Esser 1999).

Another exceptional factor that promotes tabloidisation of political discourses in the case of *The Herald* were allegations that the newspaper was being manipulated by political forces or a faction of ZANU PF which dictated the editorial direction with utter disregard of journalistic ethics. This disregard was done to ‘assassinate’ the character of Joice Mujuru by any means including publishing of falsehoods. The hijacking of the editorial control by a faction allegedly led by the so-called Team Lacoste, itself, allegedly headed by Emerson Mnangagwa, used the Zimpapers stable including *The Herald* to fight Jonathan Moyo who is believed to front another faction called Generation 40 or G40 in the ZANU PF succession matrix.

Another cause of tabloidisation of the press in the Zimbabwean setting has been largely due to the polarisation of the press along political lines, which resulted in the publication of half-truths, conjectures and innuendos as all the newspapers sought to fulfil their own objectives which were set by forces outside the newsroom structures. Media polarisation has been defined mainly along political lines with the private and state-owned media holding entrenched positions reflective of a polarised society, especially after the Land Reform Programme and the emergence of the MDC as a major threat to ZANU PF’s political and economic hegemony in 1999 (Chari 2009, Raftopoulos 2009). The net effect of the media polarisation is the sacrifice of objectivity as the newspapers seek to depict their chosen position (MMPZ 2002).

While the polarisation of the media for over two decades was also identified as one the major causes of tabloidisation through sensationalism, corruption and political interference has also been identified as the other root cause of the tabloidisation of the press in Zimbabwe. Media corruption has seen journalists being directly under the control of powerful politicians (VMCZ 2013, IMPI 2014).

The results of corruption in the media is that the media concentrates on trivial matters rather than questioning the conduct of powerful societal figures. As a result, the media’s role as the fourth estate is compromised and the media’s general failure to unpack concrete material issues becomes apparent. In the case of *The Herald*, Mujuru is outrightly rejected while in the *Daily*

*News* the sympathetic frame is used to project Mujuru as a victim of the succession battle in ZANUPF even after she is expelled from the political party. The study also found out that the poor remuneration that most journalists in the country earn also increased their vulnerability to manipulation by politicians and thus compromised their roles in terms of reporting political issues. The media ends up being mere extensions of politicians' views, instead of being watchdogs on behalf of society. *The Herald*, *NewsDay* and the *Daily News*, whether by default or design, are undergoing the damaging process of tabloidisation. Tabloidisation by its nature negates the efficient functioning of the mediated public sphere by working in opposition to the creation of "general truths, general principles which would guide the formulation and implementation of the necessary regulation of social life" (McNair 2001).

## **7.2 Conclusions on the tabloidisation of news in Zimbabwe**

The research has established that in the coverage of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF and government, *The Herald*, *Daily News* and *NewsDay* departed from objective journalism by focusing on reporting on political statements without giving balanced analysis of material realities in the country. The newspapers concentrated more on issues that were meant to appeal to the human instincts in a more entertaining rather than informative ways as with typical tabloid newspapers (Brookes 2000). In this sense, the media continually undermine the intellectual minds of the readers and the newspapers and wittingly or unwittingly assist in maintaining the status that has reduced the country to a place of tears and silence.

The framing of Joice Mujuru by the three papers also points to a dearth of publication of serious and accurate information which enables citizens to make informed political choices. Such a dearth could possibly lead to apathy in politics and with the net effect of destroying the public sphere of rational debate (McNair 2001).

Furthermore, the reportage on the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF and government by *The Herald*, *NewsDay*, and *NewsDay* has the potential to lead to mass cynicism in terms of political news as some respondents showed that they no longer believed what comes from the three newspapers. Ordinary readers also continually question the authenticity of the whole reportage of the Joice Mujuru issue, especially on why she has not be charged with treason. Readers believe that the media could be playing games as previously all other political leaders who have been accused of treason like Ndabaningi Sithole of Zanu Ndonga and Morgan Tsvangirai were arrested and charged.

One frightening aspect is the perception by readers that all the newspapers under study are partisan and the only hope that people have is to look for information on social media. In such a scenario, the media ceases to function as a public sphere and thus becomes irrelevant to society. One aspect that the study questioned is the inability of the newspapers under study to question the tradition that all those who oppose Mugabe's rule are always accused of treason. The study established that the newspapers simply want to push sales by writing on the allegations that Mujuru was facing.

Broadsheets in Zimbabwe are adopting tabloid styles and seem to fulfil the pejorative sense of tabloid formatting in being very casual, concise and sensationalist in both tone and language (Conboy 2006, Sampson 1996). In the final analysis, Zimbabwean newspapers, *The Herald*, *Daily News* and *NewsDay*, are fast drifting away from broadsheet journalism which should inform the public by using serious language and tone (McLachlan and Golding 2000) through the adoption of tabloid styles and formatting.

Tabloidisation is not good for democracy and the ascribed roles of the media especially to inform and to educate as demonstrated in this study as *The Herald*, *Daily News* and *NewsDay* failed to unpack the issue but instead took fixed positions which did not lead to the enlightenment of the citizens. Democracy relies on enlightened citizens who are well informed in terms of political developments which can be made possible by the media. Without such knowledge citizens may fail to exercise their democratic rights which in the Zimbabwean setting has seen citizens voting without choosing by focusing on individual cultic leaders instead of sound economic and political programmes of a candidate. This study has demonstrated that the media in Zimbabwe is not providing citizens with critical information about politician's programmes but focus more on personality of the individuals as either the problem or the solution. This leads citizens to invest in personalities as opposed to demand their programme of action. The Zimbabwean media scene seems to conform to an assertion by Sparks quoted in (Williams: 2003) who argues that "while there may be more information as well, public understanding is declining. Public ignorance and apathy is growing as the seriousness, challenging and truthful is being pushed aside by the trivial, sensational, and vulgar and manipulated" (2003:230).

What this suggests is that in the Zimbabwean setting, tabloids and tabloidisation have the potential to further dilute the already unstable public sphere as noted by Mabweazara who argued that;

... in Zimbabwe the prospects of readers becoming less interested in conventional hard news, and less critical of the techniques typical of the tabloid style, is glaringly significant (2005:32).

A media that is tabloidised is not very functional for a society as tabloids are not known for promoting the consolidation of a democratic culture. Tabloids have no obligations to promote debate on serious issues in society as they enjoy “themselves stirring up one-sided prejudices, encouraging half-truths and intolerance among other ills” (Sampson 1996:48). Such a description fits very well into the way in which *The Herald*, *NewsDay* and *Daily News* framed the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF and government as was demonstrated in this study.

- **The fourth question of the study was: Which of the three papers best illustrates the worst effects of tabloidization and why?**

The study has established that all the selected newspapers are undergoing the damaging process of tabloidisation in terms of political news reporting. *The Herald* presents the worst case scenario, followed by the *Daily News* and *NewsDay* respectively. Tabloidisation of political news at *The Herald* manifests itself in targeted character assassination and demonisation of perceived political foes from a political faction that has hijacked editorial control. The result of such assassinations and smear campaigns is the printing gossip and fake stories especially with regards to Mujuru (Bird 2000, Sloan 2001). *The Herald* has lost any kind of relevance in its political stories written in a brazen propagandist manner which are even worse than tabloids, which openly admit that they spice up issues to provide readers with a way of relaxation or that they simply give people what they want (Sparks 2000). The conversion of *The Herald* into a war zone for competing political factions in ZANU PF is the major cause for the tabloidisation of its political reporting. While tabloids use attention seeking and entertaining stories to sell copy (Franklin 1997), this does not seem to be the case for *The Herald* which has a strong market presence in Zimbabwe since 1897 with the support of loyal advertisers who seem unmoved by the editorial content.

The tabloidisation of political news by *The Herald* stems from the hijacking of editorial content by a faction of the ZANU PF party. This trend was epitomised by the coverage of Joice Mujuru when Jonathan Moyo was in control of the editorial. When Moyo lost control by being moved to another ministry, he immediately became a target of the entire Zimpapers group as the so called Team Lacoste allegedly fronted by Emerson Mnangagwa used the papers to advance its interests against the G40 faction. The hijacking of editorial control of the Zimpapers group is

through media and information permanent secretary George Charamba who was openly rebuked by the First Lady Grace Mugabe for writing ‘useless stories’ and fighting Jonathan Moyo through the Zimpapers stable (*Prof Jonathan Moyo is clean – First Lady The Sunday Mail 30/07/17*). It therefore follows that the way in which *The Herald* dramatises the factional fights conforms to the description of tabloidisation by Franklin (1999:19) who argues that “news media has become part of the entertainment industry rather than being a forum for informed debate about important issues of public concern”. *The Herald* thus represents the worst in terms of tabloidisation of the political story and the resultant tabloidisation by the *Daily News* and *NewsDay* is in response to the framing of Mujuru by *The Herald*. The tabloidisation that manifests in the *Daily News* and *NewsDay* is motivated by commercial motives to survive in a declining economy and seeking to offer an alternative voice albeit in support of a perceived political ally. However, the two newspapers fail to provide the alternatives beyond the stereotypes that whoever opposes President Mugabe can offer solutions to the country’s economic and political challenges. They seem to enjoy themselves in peddling subjective stereotypes and in the process fail to offer an alternative views which can enhance public understanding.

With the exception of its counter frames in which the *Daily News* exposed the fallacies of *The Herald* framing of Mujuru, especially the corrupt frame, the *Daily News* is a direct opposite of *The Herald* in terms of sensationalisation and trivialisation in its reportage of Joice Mujuru. *NewsDay* though marked by desire to prop up Mujuru using sensationalism and tabloid formatting, did try to be less tabloid in its approach by revealing the bad side of Mujuru especially that she has some cruelty and corrupt tendencies illustrated by her refusal to co-operate in the finalisation of the will of her late husband thereby disadvantaging the children sired by General Mujuru with other women.

It is the contention of this study that developing countries like Zimbabwe, which are bedevilled with close to two decades of political and socio-economic challenges, need a press that can promote robust debate and produce quality news especially in terms of political reporting so that citizens have informed views of such developments so that they can make meaningful contributions instead of the sensationalism that currently defines it. The research has demonstrated that readers are clear about their expectations from broadsheet newspapers and demand better and analytical content which is not inclined to infotainment. This therefore means that the media should not continue to offer such a disservice to readers who expect much better content.

If citizens are to rely on the social media for information, as alluded to by respondents, then the mainstream press would become irrelevant and dysfunctional in the Zimbabwean society. Furthermore, the media seem to have been hijacked across the ownership divide and have virtually abdicated their roles of being watchdogs and as the Fourth Estate in society.

### **7.3 Recommendations**

In view of the above findings of this study, the following points are offered as recommendations:

- *The Herald, Daily News and NewsDay* need a self-introspection and rededication to ethical and objective journalism in order to earn respect from readers as the watchdogs of society by distancing themselves from vested interests such as politicians and political parties.
- *The Herald, Daily News and NewsDay* also need to wean themselves from the current polarisation and sensationalisation as the contemporary challenges are not permanent. Readers will continue to demand objective information in order to be able to make informed decisions in matters such as elections and other important societal aspects.
- There is also a compelling need to insulate the public media such as *The Herald* from direct control of government ministers by re- establishing a buffer zone between it and the government if it is to be rescued from the trend towards tabloidisation.
- Future research must extend the study to include other media such as radio and television magazines and even documentaries since tabloidisation represents an adaptation process of the tabloid journalism styles (Bek 2004, Conboy 2005, and Glyn 2000). Such a research will enable a comprehensive understanding of the nature and extent of the tabloidisation of the media in Zimbabwe.
- Further studies also need to be done especially in terms of how the media can be rescued from the damaging trend towards tabloidisation which currently manifests itself in political news reporting.

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## 9.0 APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1- Protocol for tracking article coverage/framing of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from Zanu PF.

Name of Newspaper	
Date	
Article type ( News, Editorial comment ,Opinion, Columnist)	
Author	
Headline	
Article sources/experts	
Message/emphasis of article/focus	
Description of Mujuru/Allies Framing (word choice, metaphors, exemplars, descriptions, arguments and visual images)	
Important quotes	
<b>Tabloid tactics</b> Use of unidentified sources Sensational wording( producing great interest or excitement, shocking, startling) Colour pages Large photographs, larger than the articles Printing of unconfirmed gossip and speculation Outlandish (strange or unfamiliar) claims Unsubstantiated/unsupported claims Attention getting/screaming headlines	

Diagrams and tables meant to promote visual attraction Individualism/personification( focus on the individual in contrast to subject matter) Use of unchecked information sources Simplified, casual tone, conversational style, slang language Subjective and biased reporting	
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## APPENDIX 2

### The Herald stories analysed in the study

#### Editorial comment

Date	Author	Headline
11/09/2015	The Herald	Joice Mujuru shows her true colours
17/11/2014	The Herald	It's all very constitutional Cde VP
11/12/2014	The Herald	Lessons from Mnangagwa,Mujuru story
10/12/2014	The Herald	Mujuru blown away by own bomb
08/12/2014	The Herald	Congress, what the doctor ordered
04/12/2014	The Herald	None but ourselves can build Zimbabwe
03/12/2014	The Herald	Congress, more than a Zanu PF event
01/12/2014	The Herald	So near yet so far for Mujuru

#### Letters to the editor

Date	Author	Headline
11/09/2015	Anonymous	Mujuru lost the plot
10/09/2015	Kumbirai Tiripavanhu	Mujuru's 'manifesto' won't fool us
06/04/2015		Mujuru must come clean on will

10/12/2014	Suitable Kajau	Keep it up the mother of revelations
08/12/2014	Suitable Kajau	Purge of corrupt ministers welcome
08/12/2014	Zim Citizen Binga	Mujuru, cohorts will not be missed
22/09/2015	T.Gutu	No room for sell-outs
05/12/2014	Cde Shungudzemoyo	Mujuru betrayed the nation
04/12/2014	Naison Mapipe	It's time for VP to apologise to the nation
04/12/2014	SK Harare	Vice President bit the hand that feed her
03/12/2014	Caitlin Kamba	VP Mujuru has fallen from grace
01/12/2014	Suitable Kajau	Coup plotters must be brought to book
28/11/2014	Mayor PaMvurwi	VP keen to protect her corrupt empire

### Hard News Articles

Date	Author	Headline
16/09/2015	Farirai Machivenyika	President speaks on ex VP Mujuru. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slates Media fabrications</li> <li>• Calls for responsible journalism</li> </ul>
23/08/2016	Takunda Maodza	General Mujuru's children wallow in poverty
07/11/2015	Daniel Nemukuyu	Court orders Mujuru to pay \$1,5M
15/09/2015	Fidelis Munyoro and Samantha Chigogo	Tsvangirai confirms Mujuru links
10/09/2015	Herald Reporters	Mujuru headed for the sunset <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MDC-T analysts slate manifesto</li> </ul>
10/09/2015	Farirai Machivenyika	Zanu PF dismisses Mujuru manifesto
07/4/2015	Lovemore Mataire	Mujuru putschists vindicate expulsion
24/12/2014	Herald Reporters	Top detectives probe Mujuru
18/12/2014	Crime Reporter	Mujuru probe hots up
11/12/2014	Herald Reporter	President warns against rogue elements

11/12/2014	Farirai Machivenyika	VP's appointed,Mnangagwa,Mpoko land posts
10/12/2014	Felex Share	Sekeramayi,Parirenyatwa survive
10/12/2014	Felex Share	President hailed for expulsions
10/12/2014	Lloyd Gumbo and Tendai Mugabe	VP Mujuru,8 ministers fired
10/12/2014	NduduzoTshuma	.....Mujuru pleads innocence
17/12/2014	Herald Reporter	Didymus Mutasa ropes MDC-T <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Courts parties ,NGO for sympathy</li> <li>• Bid to subvert will of the people</li> </ul>
18/12/2014	ZBC/Herald Reporter	Mnangagwa speaks on unity
09/12/2014	Felex Share and Tendai Mugabe	Sekeramayi, Pari on the ropes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zanu Pf orders elections today</li> <li>• Let people's will prevail: President</li> </ul>
09/12/2014	Farirai Machivenyika	Mujuru Plot, the Wikileaks footprint
08/12/2014	Fidelis Munyoro	Mujuru resurfaces, booed
08/12/2014	Lloyd Gumbo	President calls for self belief <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emulate national heroes</li> <li>• None but ourselves can do it for Zim</li> </ul>
08/12/2014	Fidelis Munyoro	Sekeramayi, Mudarikwa under fire
08/12/2014	Herald Reporter	Cabinet to sit tomorrow
05/12/2014	Takunda Maodza	Mujuru faces jail: President
05/12/2014	Tinashe Farawo	.....as VP, allies remain AWOL
05/12/2014	Farirai Machivenyika	First Lady's candour hailed
05/12/2014	President Mugabe(speech)	VP Mujuru's allies face the boot
04/12/2014	Farirai Machivenyika	President on assassination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mujuru engaged MDC-T, N'angas</li> <li>• VP misses 3<sup>rd</sup> straight Indaba</li> </ul>
03/04/2015	Farirai Machivenyika	Zanu expels Joice Mujuru <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slew of allegations cited</li> <li>• Plots traced as far back as 2004</li> </ul>

03/12/2014	Herald Reporter	Congress's judgement day for VP Mujuru- MP
03/12/2014	Lloyd Gumbo	President breaks silence on Mujuru <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raps simplistic thinking</li> <li>• Collusion with opposition, westerners</li> </ul>
03/12/2014	Farirai Machivenyika	..... as she misses congress opening day
02/12/2014	Lloyd Gumbo	VP Mujuru stole my picture: War vet
29/11/2014	Lloyd Gumbo	VP Mujuru in \$4m scandal
29/11/2014	Innocent Ruwende and Abel Zhakata	Youths to bar renegades from congress
26/11/2014	Lloyd Gumbo	Mavhaire, Mutezo should be arrested
26/11/2014	Herald Reporter	Goche linked to MDC-T regime change agenda
26/11/2014	Zvamaida Murwira	Reject losers, President urged
26/11/2014	Herald Reporter	Mujuru sucked in fatal scandal
26/11/2014	George Maponga	Police detectives interview Hwarare
18/11/2014	Herald Reporter	Mujuru, Daily News gang up on The Herald
25/11/2014	Tawanda Mangoma	Goche talked of bloodshed: Hwarare
25/11/2014	Lloyd Gumbo	Zesa funds used to bankroll Mujuru <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ceo confirms transaction</li> <li>• Millions involved</li> <li>• Mavhaire, Mutezo implicated</li> </ul>
24/11/2014	Herald Reporter	Mash Central says no to VP Mujuru <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central committee application rejected</li> <li>• Nicholas Goche opts out</li> </ul>
22/11/2014	Lovemore Mataire	'VP Mujuru has expelled herself'
22/11/2014		Goche discussed assassination plot
20/11/2014	Herald Reporter	Goche remains in ICU
28/11/2014	Herald Reporter	VP Mujuru rapped
28/11/2014	Herald Reporter	Fred Moyo booted out
28/11/2014	George Maponga	War vets demonstrate against Bhasikiti

21/11/2014	Herald Reporter	Mutasa's double face exposed
20/11/2014	Herald Reporter	Mujuru faction courts MDC-T <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parties discuss merger modalities</li> <li>• Mujuru tipped for presidency, Tsvangirai PM</li> </ul>
19/11/2014	Herald Reporter	VP Mujuru in another scandal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business woman sold stolen car</li> <li>• Efforts to recover \$105 000 blocked</li> </ul>
19/11/2014	Herald Reporter	Bhasikiti misses MDC-T
18/11/2014	Felex Share	First Lady repeats call for Mujuru's resignation
18/11/2014	Lloyd Gumbo	Outrage over VP Mujuru statement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provincial chairs dismiss support claim</li> <li>• Urged to address allegations against her</li> </ul>
18/11/2014	Felex Share	Students back resignation call
17/11/2014	Daniel Nemukuyu	Mujuru estate in limbo
17/11/2014	Takunda Maodza	Step down, war vets tell Mujuru
02/11/2014	Herald Reporters	GMO+ Scandal rocks food sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VP Mujuru sucked in</li> <li>• Millions creamed off</li> </ul>
02/12/2014	Herald Reporters	More heavyweights face the chop
03/12/2014	Herald Reporter	Mutasa III
02/12/2014	Felex Share	Mutezo loots Zesa funds
11/11/2014	Zvamaida Murwira	Mujuru fingered in chicken scam
11/11/2014	Herald Reporters	Ray Kaukonde, Langa kicked out <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plot to oust president cited</li> <li>• Interim leaders appointed</li> </ul>
08/11/2014	Fidelis Munyoro	Call to discipline bad apples
08/11/2014	Freeman Razemba	.....delegates hail Congress
29/10/2014	Herald Reporter	Opposition legislators give VP Mujuru standing ovation
28/10/2014	Zvamaida Murwira	Jabu confesses to VP Mujuru deals



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirms extortion allegations</li> <li>• VP hands not clean</li> </ul>
22/08/2014	Elita Chikwati	Agric can spur growth: Mujuru
10/10/2016	Zvamaida Murwira	Nyamirai rips into 'hypocritical' Mujuru
18/10/2014	Farirai Machivenyika and Felex Share	Mujuru linked Mavambo,MDC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divisive parties formed in VP's house</li> <li>• Condone graft ,factionalism</li> </ul>

### Analysis/opinion

Date	Author	Headline
25/06/2016	Radar	Mujuru is the new Humpty Dumpty
	Tichaona Zindoga	Mujuru: Reluctant, Incapable BUILD-er
15/09/2015	Nick Mangwana	BUILD: Mujuru first people second
14/09/2015	Geoffrey Nyarota	Joice Mujuru and the 'Spilling of blood'
11/09/2015	JoramNyathi	Mujuru's sound and fury that, a fool's tale
11/09/2015	John Mukumbo	Mujuru in attempt to reverse empowerment
10/09/2015	Tichaona Zindoga	Mujuru poses more threat to MDC-T than Zanu PF
27/11/2014	Reason Wafawarova	Muckraking politics
08/12/14	Tichaona Zindoga	Congress: No losers, just a winning Zanu PF
18/12/2014	Reason Wafawarova	Politics and loyalty
17/12/2014	Tichaona Zindoga	Mutasa and Co now opposition,de facto
17/11/2014	Qhubani Moyo	Mujuru's only political option
11/12/2014	Hildegard	'Simplistic' assumptions that cost
11/12/2014	Tafara Shumba	Mujuru cabal should have heeded First Lady's advice
11/12/2014	Reason Wafawarova	Tragedy of presumptuous ambitions

09/12/2014	Mukachana Hanyani	VP Mujuru: A victim of political miscalculation
10/11/2014	Qhubani Moyo	Scenarios for Zanu PF congress
05/12/2014	Joram Nyathi	VP Mujuru hoist by own petard
04/12/2014	Tichaona Zindoga	5 things 2014 revealed about VP Mujuru
03/12/2014	Tichaona Zindoga	When dwarfs are divested of giant robes
18/11/2014	Tichaona Zindoga	Zanu PF: When enemy within is revealed

### **Cartoon**

Date	Author	Headline
11/09/2015	Innocent Mpofu	
11/12/2014	Innocent Mpofu	
10/12/2014	Innocent Mpofu	
08/12/2014	Innocent Mpofu	
04/12/2014	Innocent Mpofu	

### **APPENDIX 3**

#### ***Daily News* stories analysed in the study**

##### **Editorial comment**

Date	Author	Headline
15/11/14		Carnage for Mujuru faction
17/11/14		A regime gone made
01/12/14		Mugabe losing grip on Zanu PF
9/12/14		Mugabe must be decisive

##### **Letters to the editor**

Date	Author	Headline
17/08/16	Kazumula Matilaya	Coalition: Wake up call for Zanu PF

### ***Hard News Articles***

Date	Author	Headline
13/08/14	Lloyd Mbiba	This Stinks: Zanu PF masters of rigging, Plot to derail Mujuru
20/10/14	Lloyd Mbiba	Mugabe backs Mujuru attacks
25/10/14		Politburo ignores Grace's demands
19/10/14	Cris Goko	Grace tours, a 'dud'
10/11/14	Tendai Kamhungira	'Zanu PF factional wars engineered by Mugabe'
10/11/14	Guthrie Munyuki	Grace's entrance...a sign Mugabe could rule for life
12/11/14	Thelma Chikwanha	Mujuru has not resigned: Govt
12/11/14	Thelma Chikwanha	Boiling point, Gumbo fears violent demos could spiral out of control, analysts say 'revolution' now eating own children
13/11/14	Fungi Kwaramba	Mugabe being abused : Dongo
13/11/14	Lloyd Mbiba	Mujuru ally tortured...gunshots in Harare as succession fight hots up
14/11/14	Gift Phiri	'Axing Mujuru will backfire
16/11/14	Fungi Kwaramba	Dongo receives death threats
16/11/14	Gift Phiri and Chris Goko	'Mugabe wants no successor'
17/11/14	Lloyd Mbiba	'Illegal phone bugging, spying rampant'
21/11/14	Fungi Kwaramba	'Mujuru opposed Makoni'
21/11/14	Mugove Tafirenyika	Chihuri dismisses resignation rumours
22/11/14	Thelma Chikwanha	Mugabe maybe stuck with Mujuru: analysts
25/1/14	Lloyd Mbiba and Mugove Tafirenyika	Bloodbath in Zanu PF, at least 10 ministers, over 100 MP's face chop

7/12/14	Tendai Kamhungira	Grace, the power behind the throne
8/12/14	Maxwell Sibanda	Whither Mugabe assassination
28/10/14	Thelma Chikwanha	Grace's 'final push' in limbo
01/12/14	Lloyd Mbiba	Mujuru's poser: To attend or not to attend Zanu PF Congress
5/12/14	Chengetai Zvauya and Mugove Tafirenyika	Mugabe threatens Mujuru with arrest
10/12/14	Lloyd Mbiba	CARNAGE! As Mugabe sacks Mujuru, 8 ministers
7/12/14	Lloyd Mbiba	'Infighting destroying Zanu PF'
8/12/14	Margaret Chinowaita	Mugabe under fire over VP comments
15/04/15	Gift Phiri	Rescue us, Mujuru told
23/02/16	Tendai Kamhungira	They murdered my husband –Mujuru...but denies to name the killers for now
5/08/16	Blessings Mashaya	Mujuru's ouster : Fresh details
17/11/14	Gift Phiri and Fungi Kwaramba	Is Mujuru facing imminent arrest?...as VP launches spirited fightback
21/11/14	Lloyd Mbiba	Mujuru attacks now comical: analysts
24/11/14	Fungi Kwaramba	I quit – as fresh chaos and violence hit Zanu PF
27/11/14	Mugove Tafirenyika	Mujuru, Goche in politburo no show
26/10/14	Maxwell Sibanda	'Grace reduces Mugabe to ordinary man'
2/12/14	Thelma Chikwanha, Mugove Tafirenyika and ChengetaiZvauya	Hired thugs target Mujuru...as hundreds are denied accreditation, controversial Gomwe threatens Daily News
3/12/14	Mugove Tafirenyika and Fungi Kwaramba	Mujuru fears for her life: Attend at own risk, Mujuru warned, Mugabe says VP wants him out.
3/12/14	Gift Phiri	Thugs harass, abuse Sekeramayi's wife
4/12/14	Mugove Tafirenyika and Chengetai Zvauya	Mujuru used on me – Mugabe
8/11/14	John Kachembere	Mugabe warned

7/12/14	Lloyd Mbiba, Mugove Tafirenyika and Chengetai Zvauya	Mujuru falls, as Mugabe dithers on succession, Mnangagwa left in suspense
7/12/14	Lloyd Mbiba	I destroyed Mujuru: Grace ...as Mugabe chants Pasi ne Zanu PF
7/12/14	Tendai Kamhungira	Grace, the power behind the throne
10/12/14	Fungi Kwaramba	‘Grace’s feud with Mujuru divides Zanu PF’
10/12/14	Fungi Kwaramba	Purges show Zanu PF rigs elections
25/03/15	Fungi Kwaramba	Zanu PF terrorises Mujuru supporters
25/11/15	Mugove Tafirenyika	Mujuru followers get death threats...but vow they won’t be intimidated
24/08/16	Fungi Kwaramba and Blessings Mashaya	Irate war vets defend Mujuru
28/01/16	Mugove Tafirenyika	Mujuru MP’s face the gun...as Zanu PF purges them to slow down People First
28/01/16	Mugove Tafirenyika	Mujuru supporter’s home razed down
18/10/14	Fungi Kwaramba	Mujuru backers say no to Grace
20/10/14	Chris Goko	Mujuru(s) reaping what they sowed?
20/10/14	Lloyd Mbiba	Mugabe backs Mujuru attacks
27/10/14	Fungi Kwaramba	Mujuru shows Grace the way...as politburo members weep for VP
18/11/14	Tendai Kamhungira	Mujuru defence ‘spot on’
18/11/14	Lloyd Mbiba	Go now, Grace orders Mujuru, Mugabe’s wife boasts about trapping VP
26/11/14	Fungi Kwaramba	I’ll never surrender : Mujuru supporters chant Pasi ne zvipfukuto slogan
14/12/15	Jeffery Muvundisi	‘Mujuru will act on Gukurahundi’ People First vows as party’s official launch beckons
5/02/16	Gift Phiri	Mujuru searches for Gukurahundi solution
17/06/16	Mugove Tafirenyika	Mujuru lays in Mugabe...describes his Gukurahundi rants as “reckless”

7/08/16	Blessings Mashaya	I will not revenge: Mujuru
20/08/16	Blessings Mashaya	Mujuru campaigns in Binga
06/03/16	Tendai Kamhungira	Mujuru one of us: Tsvangirai...says Mugabe will be 'Chicken feed' in 2018
01/01/17	Blessings Mashaya	Mugabe will fall, Mujuru predicts
11/08/14	Fungi Kwaramba	Mujuru hits back... as Mnangagwa faction is walloped
17/11/14	Gift Phiri	Mujuru fights back
21/11/14	Lloyd Mbiba	Fresh crisis hit Zanu PF, as Mujuru piles pressure on Mugabe, members ask 'Who is in charge?'
8/12/14	Tendai Kamhungira	Its game on...as Mujuru ignores Mnangagwa, Khaya Moyo
9/12/14	Fungi Kwaramba	Mujuru speaks out
23/11/14	Tendai Kamhungira	Mugabe in politburo jibes
23/11/14	Thelma Chikwanha	Mugabe –Master of divide and rue tactics
11/12/14	Blessings Mashaya	I will die in Zanu PF: Mujuru
15/12/14	Fungi Kwaramba	Life goes on – ex VP Mujuru says she prays for peace in Zimbabwe
19/10/14	Lloyd Mbiba	'Grace is a liar'
19/11/14	Wendy Muperi	Grace attack on Mujuru hit new lows
19/11/14	Thelma Chikwanha	'Mugabe being fed lies'
26/11/14	Fungi Kwaramba	Explain Mujuru death: Brother
27/11/14	Wendy Muperi	Mujuru- Makoni fatal accident not covered-up - Police
20/11/14	Fungi Kwaramba	Dogfight over Mujuru post, fierce battle for Zanu PF number 2 position
24/11/14	Tendai Kamhungira	Sikhala scoffs at Mugabe ouster claim
15/11/14	Fungi Kwaramba	Is this Mujuru's end

15/11/14	Fungi Kwaramba	Gumbo speaks, Fired for backing Mujuru, Mugabe led attack
2/12/14	Staff Writer	‘Kaukonde forgery a hoax’
26/03/15	Fungi Kwaramba	They are mad, Mujuru charges
2/10/16	Fungi Kwaramba	Relentless Mujuru hounds Govt,RBZ
11/09/16	Jeffrey Muvundisi	Mugabe has pushed Zim back into colonisation: Mujuru
13/08/15	Mugove Tafirenyika and Fungi Kwaramba	People First takes shape, Movement says infiltration won’t derail it.
01/10/16	Fungi Kwaramba	Mujuru aims her guns at Mugabe
6/01/16	Mugove Tafirenyika and Jeffrey Muvundisi	Mujuru fishes in Zanu PF ponds
7/01/16	Farai Machamire and Mugove Tafirenyika	Zim Political tension rises...as Tsvangirai, Mujuru ratchet up pressure on Mugabe
09/01/16	Mugove Tafirenyika and Fungi Kwaramba	‘Mujuru winning Zanu PF battle’ ...as insiders say she has snared dozens of MP’s from ruling party
15/01/16	Mugove Tafirenyika	Zanu PF loses to Mujuru...as hordes of despondent followers ditch warring ruling party high ranking officials
17/01/16	Mugove Tafirenyika	Mujuru gains more ground...as she harvests Zanu PF officials ,raids Makoni’s MKD
5/02/16	Fungi Kwaramba	Team Lacoste ‘courts’ Mujuru...as Zanu PF wars gets nastier, more confusing
7/02/16	Bridget Mananavire	Mujuru turns down Zanu PF...and vows she will ‘never’ go back to the ruling party
29/02/16	Fungi Kwaramba	Mugabe did not fire me: Mujuru, says she chose to walk away from Zanu PF madness
15/12/14	Lloyd Mbiba	‘Mujuru allies’ ejected from Mnangagwa party
17/03/16	Mugove Tafirenyika and Fungi Kwaramba	Mujuru courts Team Lacoste
14/06/16	Mugove Tafirenyika	Mujuru takes off her gloves...as she launches 2018 campaign Byo rally

17/06/16	Staff Writer	Mujuru is senior to Mugabe -Mavhaire
25/06/16	Blessings Mashaya	Mujuru to spill beans...as she addresses ZPF rally in Harare today
19/08/16	Fungi Kwaramba	Mujuru threatens to 'expose' Mugabe
4/10/16	Fungi Kwaramba and Farai Machamire	Zanu PF plots Mujuru demise

### **Analysis/opinion**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Headline</b>
30/11/14	Alex T Magaisa	Mujuru has legal options
18/10/14	Prince Ndlovu	Is Mugabe speaking through First Lady?
11/08/14	Maxwell Sibanda	Grace should slow down
17/08/16	Maxwell Sibanda	Tsvangirai, Mujuru present formidable coalition
21/08/16	Obert Gutu	'Strong coalition will send Zanu PF packing in 2008

## **APPENDIX 4**

### ***NewsDay* stories analysed in the study**

#### **Editorial comment**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Headline</b>
10/12/14		Mujuru sacking: End of era!
19/11/14		Don't be led by Zanu PF opportunists
21/11/14		What has Mugabe up his sleeve?

#### **Letters to the editor**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Headline</b>
25/10/14	Nhamo	Nothing to fear now Mujuru, take them on
18/11/14	Jimmy Uhuru	Mujuru wasting time showering Mugabe with titles



24/11/14	Chris Ndanga	Mujuru camp made up of cowards
25/11/14	Miracle PHD	Mugabe eating more than he can chew

### Hard News Articles

Date	Author	Headline
07/07/14	Moses Matenga	True war vets are humble
06/10/14	Everson Mushava	Mujuru faction dumps Gono
11/08/14	Everson Mushava	Mujuru faction storms back
25/10/14	Obey Manayiti	‘Mujuru camp after my life’
27/10/14	Obey Manayiti	Mujuru heads to Manicaland
29/10/14	Veneranda Langa and Winstone Antonio	MDC-T MP’s jeer Grace, cheer Mujuru
25/10/14	Everson Mushava	Put your house in order, Mugabe tells Oppah
25/10/14	Obey Manayiti	‘Mujuru camp after my life’
28/10/14	Obey Manayiti	Mujuru allies cry foul
7/11/14	Richard Muponde	Gumbo a Rhodesian sell out- Mpofu
01/11/14	Everson Mushava	‘Mujuru going nowhere’
10/11/14	Richard Muponde	Attacking Mujuru is unAfrican- Msipa
14/11/14	Moses Matenga	Bloodbath in Zanu PF, Jabulani Sibanda expelled, Rugare Gumbo, 4 Chairs suspended
12/11/14	Staff reporter	Zanu PF quashes Mujuru resignation reports
17/11/14	Zerubabel Mudzingwa	VP Mujuru hits back
17/11/14	Moses Matenga	Mujuru should be charged with treason – Wadyajena
18/11/14	Nqobani Ndlovu	Mujuru finally loses Mt Darwin seat
18/11/14	Everson Mushava	Mujuru’s response hailed as dignified, but a little too late

18/11/14	Moses Matenga	‘I have evidence against Mujuru’
19/11/14	Moses Matenga	Pro- Mujuru ministers face congress shut-out
21/11/14	Nqobani Ndlovu	‘Mujuru could spring a surprise’
24/11/14	Everson Mushava	Goche flees for life ..as Mugabe save Mutasa’s skin
25/11/14	Obey Manayiti	Mutasa booted out..linked to a plot kill the president
26/11/14	Nqabani Ndlovu	Mudenda tipped for Zanu PF Chair
26/11/14	Blessed Mhlanga,Obey Manayiti and Moses Matenga	Violence erupts... as more Zanu PF chefs fall
27/11/14	Moses Matenga	Mujuru skips politburo
29/11/14	Moses Matenga	Zanu PF congress to seal Mujuru, allies fate
01/12/14	Staff Reporter	Youths threaten anti-Mugabe shutout
03/12/14	Moses Matenga and Feluna Nleya	Mugabe blasts VP Mujuru
4/12/14	Moses Matenga	Mujuru consulted N’angas : Mugabe
4/12/14	Paidamoyo Muzulu	Mugabe under fire
5/12/14	Feluna Nleya	Mugabe juju claim rises stink
5/12/14	Moses Matenga	Its gave over for VP Mujuru
5/12/14	Paidamoyo Muzulu	Arrest them all : Mugabe
5/12/14	Staff reporter	Mujuru loyalists chased away at Mnangagwa bash
5/12/14	Veneranda Langa	Women use violence, dirty tactics in outdoing each other – study
8/12/14	Staff reporter	Mujuru booed...snubs national hero burial
9/12/14	Staff reporter	Mujuru attacks Mugabe
10/12/14	Feluna Nleya and Moses Matenga	Mujuru fired, 8 other ministers axed
10/12/14	Moses Matenga	‘Mujuru pointing out Mugabe failures’

11/12/14	Staff reporters	‘Mugabe detests ambitious people’
12/12/14	Paidamoyo Muzulu and Everson Mushava	‘Mujuru to get full pay for life’
17/12/14	Own correspondent	MP faces ouster over Mujuru
17/12/14	Blessed Mhlanga	Mugabe blunders over Mujuru
18/12/14	Nqobani Ndlovu	Mujuru finally loses Mt Darwin seat
19/12/14	Feluna Nleya	Police boss vows to swoop on Mujuru camp
14/01/15	Everson Mushava	Mujuru courts Makoni, Dabengwa
26/01/15	Moses Matenga	‘State security behind Mujuru ouster’
27/01/15	Obey Manayiti and Kenneth Nyangani	Mujuru’s 100 MP’s survive
27/03/15	Our Staff reporter	Mujuru will disappears
15/04/15	Everson Mushava	Zanu PF fires ‘pro Mujuru’ army chefs
18/04/15	Obey Manayiti	Mujuru benefits withdrawal an act of cruelty :Gumbo
16/04/15	Everson Mushava	Mujuru loses salary, benefits
4/04/15	Everson Mushava	‘Mujuru losing patience’
4/02/15	Moses Matenga	Mujuru probe must target all: TIZ
05/05/15	Xolisani Ncube	Auction floor rejects Mujuru tobacco
27/05/15	Moses Matenga	‘Don’t rule out Mujuru in Mugabe succession’
26/06/15	Charles Laiton	Mujuru ally blocks Mugabe
03/06/15	Everson Mushava	‘Mujuru ready to fight Zanu PF’
3/12/15	Moses Matenga	Mujuru snubs Tsvangirai
03/12/15	Philip Chidavaenzi	Mujuru supporters denied food aid
17/08/15	Everson Mushava	Mujuru rescues 12 ex-aides
08/01/16	Richard Chidza	Tsvangirai pushes for Mujuru meet
11/01/16	Nunurai Jena and Moses Matenga	Mujuru rips into Mugabe stronghold

2/03/16	Richard Chidza and Everson Mushava	Mujuru in grand political entry
09/02/16	Everson Mushava and Moses Matenga	Mujuru stages 'palace coup'
7/09/16	Silas Nkala	Mujuru heads to Mat South
13/01/16	Staff reporters	Tsvangirai panics over Mujuru
10/02/17	Everson Mushava, Obey Manayiti and Stephen Chadenga	Bigwigs dump 'clueless' Mujuru

### Analysis/opinion

Date	Author	Headline
12/11/14	Cyprian Ndwana	Women's league blatantly brutish about Mujuru's widowhood
18/11/14	Rashweat Mukundu	The last act
21/11/14	Moses Matenga	Mujuru's fate lies in Mugabe's hands

### Cartoon

Date	Author	Headline
27/10/14	NewsDay	
17/11/14	NewsDay	
22/11/14	NewsDay	
29/11/14	NewsDay	
9/12/14	NewsDay	
11/12/14	NewsDay	

## APPENDIX 6 – Sample of questions that guided the in-depth interviews

My name is Wellington Gadzikwa ID number 63-1106172-T 47 and I am a PHD candidate registered with the University of South Africa (UNISA). My student number is 57267316 and the title of my thesis is TABLOIDISATION AND THE COVERAGE OF POLITICAL ISSUES IN ZIMBABWE: THE CASE OF JOICE MUJURU. As part of my data gathering process, I am expected to conduct interviews with selected key informants on the above topic. My focus is on the coverage of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from ZANU PF and government by three national daily newspapers; *The Herald*, *NewsDay* and *Daily News* (kindly note that the listing is not in order of importance of any newspaper). I would like to enlist your responses in this regard.

Kindly note that your responses will be treated as anonymous and no reference and attribution will made to your name. The responses will only be used for purely academic purposes and for the above mentioned thesis. I would like to thank you for sparing your precious time to participate in this exercise. You are free to decide which questions you want to answer or withdraw from this interview at any point.

Yours faithfully

Wellington Gadzikwa

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1. What is your general assessment on the coverage of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from Zanu PF and government by *The Herald Daily News and the NewsDay*?
2. What is your comment on the allegations that *The Herald*, *Daily News*, *NewsDay* employed tabloid reporting styles such a sensationalism, voyeurism and trivialisation among other in the coverage of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from Zanu PF and government by. In your view what could be the main reasons for the development of this trend in Zimbabwe.
3. Do you believe that the media in Zimbabwe can provide information that will allow voters to make informed political choices especially with regards to the reportage on Joice Mujuru by *The Herald*, *NewsDay* and *Daily News*?
4. From the coverage of the expulsion of Joice Mujuru from Zanu PF by *The Herald*, *Daily News* and *NewsDay*, what is your comment on the standards of journalism in Zimbabwe?

## APPENDIX 7

### Study population for in-depth interviews

Population	Target population	Sampling Procedure	Sample	Method	Date
Harare	Media freedom and diversity activist	Purposive	1	Unstructured Interview	06/03/17
Australia	ZANU PF activist	Purposive	1	Unstructured interview (over email)	22/02/17
Zvishavane	Journalist	Purposive	1	Unstructured Interview	27/02/17
Harare	Former Newspaper editor	Purposive	1	Unstructured Interview	24/03/17
Harare	Information Officer	Purposive	1	Unstructured Interview	26/02/17
Harare	Communication Officer	Purposive	1	Unstructured Interview	7/03/17
Harare	Freelance Journalist	Purposive	1	Unstructured Interview	05/05/17
Harare	Freelance Journalist	Purposive	1	Unstructured Interview	20/02/17
Harare	Private Newspaper editor	Purposive	1	Unstructured Interview	05/05/17
Harare	Zanu PF activist	Purposive	1	Unstructured Interview	10/05/17
Harare	Historian	Purposive	1	Unstructured Interview	08/03/17
Harare	Gender Media activist	Purposive	1	Unstructured Interview	15/02/17
Harare	Media consultant	Purposive	1	Unstructured Interview	24/02/17
Denmark	Post graduate Media student and former lecturer	Purposive	1	Unstructured Interview( over email)	13/03/17

Murehwa	Teacher	Purposive	1	Unstructured Interview	29/05/17
Bikita	Shop owner/ General dealer	Purposive	1	Unstructured Interview	30/06/17
Domboshava (Goromonzi)	Teacher	Purposive	1	Unstructured Interview	15/06/17
Harare	Unemployed university graduate	Purposive	1	Unstructured Interview	30/05/17
Harare	Small scale entrepreneur	Purposive	1	Unstructured interview	23/05/17